Daily Report

Central Eurasia

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FBIS-SOV-95-250 *29 December 95*

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Key Developments

'Russia Is Our Home' Has Chance for Duma Chairmanship

LD2812155595 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1549 GMT 28 Dec 95

[By Lyudmila Aleksandrova]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 28 (Itar-Tass) — The Russia is Our Home (NDR) bloc led by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin has won 54 State Duma seats in the December 17 elections.

Forty-four candidates have got into the lower house in nationwide and ten in single-mandate constituencies, Sergey Belyayev, who was elected the leader of NDR parliamentary faction, told a news conference today.

He said NDR's realistic chance was to forge a 80 to 100-strong faction, including independents willing to cooperate with NDR.

Belyayev informed the conference that the faction held its first meeting on December 26 and 27. It was attended by 72 newly elected parliamentarians, including independents, but not all of them have showed the wish to join the faction so far.

"At the early stage, we are seeking to form a faction of the like-minded rather than of co-travellers," Belyayev said.

NDR has all chances to contest for the post of Duma chairman, he continued, adding that the chairmanship is not necessarily going to communists, whose showing in the elections has been best.

Belyayev said the NDR faction sees itself as the only group with a potential to oppose the communists.

As for NDR's possible cooperation with the liberal Yabloko bloc, Belyayev said NDR had met "with an understanding" the criticism of the government by Grigoriy Yavlinskiy-led Yabloko.

He spelled that Yabloko employed the criticism to propel its own election campaign. However, he added, with the electioneering over, time has come for cooperation in the State Duma.

"Yabloko's position is not polar to us — they also call for reforms," he said.

Belyayev went on to say that the NDR faction would urge serious law-making instead of political squabbling in the new Duma.

The faction will press for passing bills which have been already given polish, primarily on Russia's new tax code.

The NDR faction is to have another meeting on January 11.

Chernomyrdin 'Confident' on Duma Faction Prospects

MM2812104295 Moscow TRUD in Russian 28 Dec 95 p 2

[Article by Viktor Chernomyrdin, Russian head of government and leader of "Russia Is Our Home": "Viktor Chernomyrdin: We Are Confident in Our Forces" — first paragraph is TRUD introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] The editorial office asked the head of government and of "Russia Is Our Home" [NDR] to give us his opinion on the election results and parliamentary prospects. Here is his reply:

First of all, I will express my **position on fundamental political questions** concerning the evaluation of the elections and their influence on the continuation of the course of economic and political transformations in Russia. **The most basic thing, the main thing, in my view, is:** There is no element of hopelessness or futility, nor any great surprises, in the election results. The main thing is that the elections took place. A new sociopolitical movement, the NDR, has appeared on the political map of the country and has taken up fairly firm positions **as a movement of centrists, reformers, and state-minded people.**

The new Duma will be more predictable. Apparently four or five major factions will form within it, expressing the basic sociopolitical and socioeconomic interests represented in society. And that is in itself a marked step forward in the development of democracy.

The elections also influenced the formation of the multiparty system in the country. Society, the voters, expressed a manifest confidence only in the country's main, leading parties, and excluded from participation in the Duma small political groupings and patently artificially contrived electoral associations.

We have a solid potential for stability. And that means that **all the conditions still exist for continuing the course of creating a full market economy and for the democratic transformation of the country.**

Objectively, the economic situation is such that now is the very time to set ourselves new tasks, and 1996 can and must be the first year of the commencement of economic growth. To this end, we must bring price rises down to 1.5-2 percent per month. Then credit will become cheaper and investments will get moving. They are already beginning to move a little. We are objectively entering a new stage of economic development.

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Why should we now pin our hopes on everything that brings economic growth nearer? Because this is the only sound basis for a breakthrough on social matters. If there is growth in 1996, that means that the stabilization of people's living standard will begin and real incomes will grow stronger, it means we will also have more money for social programs. And we are not planning to postpone all this indefinitely: From the beginning of the new year we plan to complete all the necessary technical groundwork for embarking on compensation for lost savings for Russians over the age of 65 and war veterans. We are also preparing a number of decisions on support for housing construction.

I would also like to say a few words about the **election campaign conducted by "Our Home."** I totally reject attempts to depict everything that was done in gloomy tones, and all talk of some kind of "defeat." In general, a lot of work was done. But there were also miscalculations that should be taken into account for the future.

The political purpose of the NDR faction's activity in the Duma is to support the course of the president and government and ensure the passage of draft laws that work for the reforms. Our faction is a community of equals who have made a conscious choice and voluntarily taken upon themselves a lofty responsibility for Russia's progress along the path of democracy and reforms. We are open to all who share our tasks and principles. We will hold, and already are holding, talks and consultations with them. There are at least 20 of the "independents" who are already prepared to join the future faction.

As for the numerical threshold for deputies' factions and groups, here our position is that the norm stipulated in the existing Duma standing orders should be retained (the formation of a deputies' group requires at least 35 people). We know of the intention of a number of "independents" to form their own group or groups. That is a normal process which the NDR regards with understanding and which we support.

The **"imperative mandate"** is not a new problem. Obviously the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] and LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia] will raise it again and try to get it enshrined in the Duma standing orders. Outwardly, this seems attractive to many people — strengthening the deputies' party discipline, etc. But in fact it is a sign of weakness, an indication of a lack of confidence in one's position. We are fundamentally opposed to that path.

The question of **allied factions and groups** is a question of both strategy and tactics for the NDR. "Genetically" speaking, the closest to us are the "Yabloko" faction and a significant proportion of the independent deputies. They are our strategic allies and partners.

We must be prepared for all forms of cooperation that produce tangible results. As for tactics, we should not be blinkered dogmatists, we should not tie our own hands beforehand. There are intelligent, sensible, and responsible people in all the factions. So let us collaborate with them on specific issues. For instance, there is nothing seditious about maintaining a working dialogue with the "social democratic" section of the Communist faction. The most important task of all is this: We must work **professionally** from the outset. There are deputies in the NDR faction who already have experience of Duma work, but there are plenty of novices too.

Another question of principle is the collaboration between the faction and the government. I do not wish to insist that they should be "twin brothers." In any case that would be damaging to the cause. But on key, fundamental questions of strategy and tactics, there should be a total understanding here.

We are confident in our forces, we do not intend to give up and resign. We will work together with the president, together with the Duma. There is no alternative!

Lebed Reiterates Intention To Run for President

LD2812125995 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1124 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — In an interview with INTERFAX, General Aleksandr Lebed, former 14th Russian Army commander, has reiterated his intention to contest the presidential elections to be held next June.

The decision to nominate him for the presidency, according to Lebed, was adopted by the Congress of Russian Communities at its council's extended session on Tuesday.

Elected to the State Duma from a single mandate district in Tula, Lebed regards current President Boris Yeltsin and leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) Vladimir Zhirinovskiy as his principal opponents at next year's presidential ballot.

Lebed did not rule out that the Communist Party's leader Gennadiy Zyuganov might also run for the Russian presidency; however, he stressed that he "hopes to agree," with the communists.

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Lebed Denies 'Strains' With Congress of Russian Communities

LD2812141095 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1404 GMT 28 Dec 95

[By Tamara Zamyatina]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW December 28 (Itar-Tass) — Maverick retired General Aleksandr Lebed, who advocates a strong rule in the country, will run for the Russian president at the June 16, 1996 elections and will register a group which would collect the necessary signatures for his registration on January 11.

"I have decided to run for the Russian president", he told Tass on Thursday.

Lebed is the man No2 in the nationalist Congress of Russian Communities (KRO) movement which performed poorly at the December State Duma election failing to overcome the 5 per cent barrier. The KRO is headed by former Security Council secretary Yuriy Skokov.

Lebed, however, won a seat in the lower house in a first-past- the-post constituency.

The General denied reports that it was the KRO which named him for presidency and said he had adopted the decision himself.

"I shall be 46 and I adopt decisions myself", he said.

However, he denied any strains with Skokov saying he was not disillusioned in KRO leaders after the election defeat.

Lebed has not yet decided which faction to join in the Duma and will initially work in pair with his brother, Aleksey Lebed, an airborne Colonel, who has also been elected to the lower house.

"We have common views on politics", he said.

Lebed refused to disclose his presidential programme saying he would do that after registration.

Other possible presidential candidates include nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, Communist party leader Gennadiy Zyuganov, liberal reformist Grigoriy Yavlinskiy, ex-vice-president Aleksandr Rutskoy, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

President Boris Yeltsin said he would announce his decision on whether to run for the second term of office in February.

Zhirinovskiy Sees Election as 'Victory' for LDPR

LD2812205495 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1219 GMT 28 Dec 95

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Tamara Zamyatina and Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Translated Text] MOSCOW, 28 Dec (ITAR-TASS) — Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, chairman of the LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia], and Valentin Kuptsov, first deputy chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [CPRF] — the two parties that did best in the State Duma elections on 17 December — have taken part in an eve of New Year poll organized by ITAR-TASS. However, when asked what they saw as the most important event for Russia in 1995, they differed in their assessment of their respective parties' success at the elections.

Vladimir Zhirinovskiy regarded the LDPR's "impressive victory" at the elections as "highly important" for the country's future. For Valentin Kuptsov, by contrast, the CPRF's victory at the elections was "no more than a detail, a working question" in the sequence of events that are of most importance in Russia's domestic politics.

Valentin Kuptsov described the 50th anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War as the most significant event of the outgoing year for Russia. "This year all mankind turned its gaze on the greatest victory of the 20th century, as a result of which the fascist plague was crushed," he noted. "This event affected almost every single family in the former USSR, as well as the relatives of those who fought in the ranks of the resistance," Valentin Kuptsov said.

Valentin Kuptsov singled out the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin as an event of worldwide significance during 1995. "This murder was a warning to all mankind of the need to draw up coordinated measures against terrorism. To their horror people saw that acts of terrorism can happen anywhere, even in places where nobody ever thought them possible," the first deputy chairman of the CPRF Central Committee stressed.

The LDPR leader believes that "the dispatch of NATO troops to Bosnia and their de facto occupation of Slav territory had the greatest impact on the world community during 1995." Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who is seeking the chairmanship of the State Duma's International Affairs Committee, claims that "the United States has launched an open offensive in the Balkans, which have the reputation of being Europe's powder keg."

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Commentary

Commentator Assesses Election Outcome

MM2812154295 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 28 Dec 95 pp 1-2

["Parliamentary Diary" by Vladimir Isakov: "Dry Storm"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted]**Reflecting on the Results**

While the Central Electoral Commission is finishing counting tenths and hundredths of a percentage in the last electoral districts, this is the very time to think about the results and lessons of the elections which have come to a end.

The biggest surprise was the fact that the "prize winners" were just four electoral associations: the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] for the left-wing forces, "Yabloko" for the right-wing forces, and the LDPR [Liberal Democratic Party of Russia] for the national patriots. And, of course, the "party of power" in the shape of "Russia Is Our Home" [NDR].

Such a result has both positive and negative aspects. Getting away from personal sympathies and antipathies, the conclusion should be drawn that the Russians were not confused and deceived at democracy's colorful fair. By choosing just four of the 43 electoral blocs and "blockettes," the country has taken a step toward a normal, predictable multiparty system. This is a considerable achievement by any yardsticks.

Foreign commentators gleefully point out that what the "Communists" have gained the "Zhirinovskiyites" have lost — from which this conclusion is drawn: The distribution of forces in the Duma has not changed significantly.

This is not quite right. According to the election results, blocs and factions of a "centrist" orientation have left the parliamentary stage — "Women of Russia" and the DPR [Democratic Party of Russia], and I would also add the Agrarians. Something which sociologists were predicting long ago has happened — the rigidly polarized "wings" have squeezed out the loose, compromising "center." The situation has become more delicate and more dangerous, because it was the "center" that was largely keeping the "wings" from running to extremes and from a tough, uncompromising skirmish both in parliament and in society.

This is why the first raptures and rejoicing on the part of the victors are gradually being replaced by concern: The Communists have been left without allies in parliament. The opportunities for political maneuvering have diminished, and they will have to take the entire charge of "grapeshot" — and there will be quite a lot of it — in the chest.

The defeat of the Agrarian Party, which is close to me, is another of the unexpected election results. Although it has taken second place in the single-seat districts (the Agrarians managed to get 20 candidates elected), the Agrarian Party has been unable to surmount the 5-percent barrier for the federal district.

There are many reasons for this, but the chief one is the incorrectly chosen strategy of the election campaign. As in 1993, the Agrarian Party was geared to "reliable," "safe" organizational structures and had included in its lists the leaders of the Agrarian Union, the agrarian trade union, consumer cooperatives, and veterans' organizations.

Alas, it turned out that a great deal had changed in two years. The administrative methods of managing political processes have been replaced by ideological and political methods. It turned out that belonging to some organizational structure certainly did not mean that a citizen would obediently follow that structure's recommendations. Even the NDR, underpinned by the vertical structures of the executive branch, was unable to "squeeze" more than 10 percent of the votes out of the electorate.

Bitter though it might be, it has to be admitted that the Agrarian Party was unable to master political methods of struggle in the elections and to keep its electorate. It did not have a clear, memorable image, and the Agrarians' leaders did not know how to play their best issues convincingly — the land question and the problem of restoring the union state. In their speeches to voters the Agrarians frequently seemed "pale copies" of the Communists.

Very soon the Agrarian Party will have to discuss the election results. It must be called very strictly to account. The future of the agrarian movement — an important political force in modern Russian society — depends on how soberly and self-critically the conclusions are drawn.

The defeat of the KRO [Congress of Russian Communities], for which the pre-election "ratings" were promising a good political future, remains a mystery to many people. It is hard to say definitely what played the decisive role here. It is possible that the voter geared to the national idea preferred Mr. Zhirinovskiy's more crude and overt option to Skokov's moderate and cautious option. The possibility cannot be ruled out that many people were put off by the aura of the "reserve party of power" that was shining above the KRO. One thing

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is obvious: This bloc's defeat has badly mixed up the cards in all the postelection deals and projections.

There is another winner, about which the mass media prefer to keep quiet — the federal law on elections adopted by the State Duma. Under conditions of incredibly complex, white-hot Russian political reality the law ensured a reliable legal basis for holding the elections — to which practically all the international observers testified.

Yes, the winning blocs in the federal district picked up a total of just under 50 percent of the votes. But, given the presence of 43 competing blocs on the lists, this is a perfectly acceptable result. At the same time account should be taken of the fact that 17 blocs which did not surmount the 5-percent barrier nonetheless got their leaders into the Duma from single-seat districts. Thus, in the final analysis, the entire spectrum of political forces in modern Russia is quite fully represented in the Duma. Is this not the electoral law's best testimonial?

Of course, there will be attempts to appeal against the election results, and in fact there already have been — I. Rybkin and I. Khakamada have made corresponding statements. In my view, from the juridical aspect these attempts have no prospects, while from the political aspect they appear simply pitiful.

Fortunately, the fears of falsification of the voting results on a significant scale have not yet been borne out. One reason is the electronic information system itself, which was feared most of all in these elections. The public announcement of the preliminary voting results, which came in over the channels of the electronic information system, significantly hampered any subsequent manipulation of those results.

Against this background Mr. Filatov, head of the Presidential Staff, made a strange impression. On arriving at the federal information center, he made himself comfortable in the official apartments of the Central Electoral Commission, as though he owned the place, and set about studying and commenting on the incoming results. On seeing for himself the Communist Party's triumphant progress, he let drop an enigmatic sentence: "The Presidential Staff has different data" — after which the flow of information thinned out and dried up before our eyes.

After interpreting the operating practice of the electronic information system, the State Duma should probably adopt a law enshrining the limits and framework for the use of this system in all upcoming elections.

Courage To Admit Defeat

The elections are over — there are winners and losers. The parties, electoral associations, and electoral blocs have had the opportunity to address the people, to set their programs, ideas, and goals before them, and to present their political leaders. Some achieved reciprocity, others did not. Such is life, such are the rules of the game. Regardless of the outcome of the competition for deputies' seats, the very fact of a political tournament (if, of course, it is conducted honestly and according to the law) is of tremendous significance to our society, which is not yet accustomed to democracy.

It is important now to acknowledge the results and agree with them inwardly, even if they do not suit some people personally. Unfortunately, far from everyone has sufficient courage to do so.

Of the "democratic" newspapers, probably only IZVESTIYA in the person of A. Plutnik has paid tribute to the election winners. The rest have poured icy contempt upon the people, on those accursed "Soviets" who again voted "the wrong way." This was stated bluntly on the fourth national channel — the NTV channel: "A people of slaves. Democracy is not for them. The presidential election should be canceled." Reveling in uninhibitedness, "democratic" journalists try hard to frighten the man in the street with a future civil war and a "dictatorship of fascists and communists."

I would like to ask: To what Soviet Union are you afraid of returning, given that, so it turns out, you have not left it? With what civil war are you frightening people, given that you yourselves were the first to unleash it in the pages of newspapers and on television and radio? What dictatorship do you fear, given that it already exists — the dictatorship of your unconcealed boorishness?

However unpleasant the election results might be to some people, according to the constitution (the constitution imposed by you) they are the supreme law. Disrespect for the people who have expressed their will by voting attests to the fact that Russia has never emerged from utter political barbarity.

The Elections Are Over, Long Live the Elections!

The final chords of the Duma polls have not yet died away, but the melodies of the next elections — the presidential elections — are being heard increasingly clearly in the atmosphere. Consultations are in full swing behind the scenes between potential aspirants and their teams, and newspaper pages are full of forecasts regarding possible alliances, combinations, and outcomes. Despite the fact that it remains an entirely open question whether these elections will be held in a country

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where the authorities systematically demonstrate their contempt for the law and the people's will. In front of the television cameras, quite unabashed, Mr. Chernomyrdin "sorted things out" with the administration heads of the regions in which the NDR failed to pick up the due number of votes. It was candidly stated that "we are not going the same way as such people." What, one wonders, are "such people" to do now? Take the blame for the government bloc's failure and resign? Make more active use of their official powers and administrative levers for victory in the elections? Or maybe juggle with the voting results? Viktor Stepanovich, light of my life, tell me...!

On the eve of the elections, taking advantage of the fact that public attention was distracted by other matters, the government adopted the decree "On Some Questions of the Activities of Regional State Television and Radio Broadcasting Organizations." Henceforth leaders of regional television and radio broadcasting organizations will be appointed and dismissed by the Russian Federal Television and Radio Broadcasting Service "by agreement with the organs of executive power of the Russian Federation's components."

It is no joking matter. It is not enough that, contrary to the law, a single branch of power — the executive — is monopolizing the appointment and dismissal of an information organ's leader. There is no longer confidence even within it: Cadre powers are being taken away from the provinces and given to the very "top." What is this if not an attempt to ensure real levers of influence for themselves in the presidential elections?

...Everything passes, and the elections will end some time. Will they be a guarantee of political stability, or will they bring the country to the brink of a civil confrontation? This largely depends on whether the people who head the country will have sufficient courage to look in the mirror, be aware of what they see there, and accept it.

Political Analyst Examines Election Results

MM2812130495 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 23 Dec 95 p 1

["Political Analyst's Opinion" by Boris Slavin: "Ideas That the People Followed"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The final count of the votes cast by voters for political parties and movements still lies ahead, but one can already say today with a fair degree of objectivity which of the electoral associations' ideas and programs won the people's support and which collapsed and why.

The most striking thing that the ideas of socialism and the restoration of the Union and Soviet power, for which no less than one-third of voters voted by voting for the Communists and parties and movements ideologically akin to them, once again proved popular in Russia, taking first place despite four years of unbridled anticommunist propaganda. Voters were not intimidated by the demagogic flights of fancy in the official mass media about the prospect of "Gulags" and repressions: They voted for people who can give them a better life.

According to my calculations, if you count all the left-wing and center-left parties, over 30 million voters in Russia still subscribe to the ideas of socialism and communism. In this connection the president's recent claim that Marxist ideology is "criminal" seems extremely strange if not absurd. Should those be the words of the "father of the nation," who wants to win the prefix "nationally elected"? It is not ideology or the path designated by it that are criminal but actions taken by politicians which result in universal impoverishment.

It was this policy, as is well known, that was proposed by Gaydar and his followers. It blindly reproduced Hajek's ideas of anticommunism and neoliberalism, which were forcibly introduced in Russia by the radical democrats. Gaydar's party, which came to power with these ideas in 1991-1992 and which ranked second on the political scene back in 1993, today failed to poll even 4 percent of the vote, and its extreme wing, "Democratic Russia," has ended up as a marginal group unable to collect even 200,000 voters' signatures.

Today the bulk of the "democratic" intelligentsia has switched to Yavlinskiy. He appealed to those people who still believe in the fruitfulness of market reforms, which he wants to implement by less radical methods than those practiced by Gaydar. Although Yavlinskiy is undoubtedly an opponent of socialism even in its contemporary Chinese form, he has repeatedly stated in his program that he does not subscribe to the unbridled anticommunisim characteristic of the president and certain radical democrats. Yavlinskiy's centrism, his ideas of "civilized" capitalism, and his affinity for liberal social democracy are today shared by over 3 million people. They are mainly people who have already improved or hope to improve their lives in the course of reform, those who want to live in a "civilized, capitalist society" without confrontation and violence against Communists. In his election campaign Yavlinskiy placed the emphasis on changing Russia's domestic policy, on modifying the ongoing reforms, but he said virtually nothing about his own foreign policy. I think that this was deliberate, in order not to frighten voters with his hostility to the idea of a political alliance between Russia and Ukraine, for which U.S. strategists

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are constantly pressing and of which he will of course be reminded during the presidential elections along with his behavior in October 1993.

"Russia Is Our Home" put forward the idea of stabilization and order in the country. This idea effectively means no more than the preservation and strengthening of the current bourgeois transformation of society, primarily an increase in the power of major financial and oil capital. Chernomyrdin's party was able to poll 10 percent in the elections not just because it was backed by the superbillionaires and "new Russians" but because Russia gravitates toward order and many people associate this with a stable authority, with the supremacy of the ruling party. Nevertheless 90 percent of voters were unwilling to join "Russia Is Our Home," mindful of the economic collapse, the ongoing Chechen crisis, and the continuing crime.

I must particularly point out Zhirinovskiy's national-patriotic idea, with which he achieved election success for the second time, contrary to the forecasts. The phenomenon of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, which he heads, should undoubtedly be sought less in the eccentricity of its leader's personality than in its program, which promises drastic measures to resolve the "Russian question" for the 25 million Russians who have ended up as outcasts in the so- called near abroad and in its promises to provide a better life for officers lacking social protection, support the power structures, and punish the "fifth column" in Russia. Although Zhirinovskiy's extremism, racism, and sometimes even overt hooliganism reduced his electorate compared with the last elections, nevertheless they do not scare Russians very much. This is the result less of their nationalist prejudices than the reaction of the bulk of the population to the breakup of the Union, the national humiliation of the radical democrats' pro-West policy, and a desire to see new people in power.

Zhirinovskiy is firmly hanging onto his national-patriotic ideological niche. That largely explains why the Congress of Russian Communities, which aspired to a new national ideology, and Rutskoy's "Derzhava" social-patriotic movement effectively failed. The ideas of "great-power policies" and a "great Russia," upheld by the leaders of these electoral associations, were expressed more vividly by Zhirinovskiy. That is why many voters were alienated when these ideas were repeated by other associations. They were evidently alienated in the same way by the talk about "the impossibility of communism" in the Congress of Russian Communities program and the "ruinous nature" for Russia of the idea of internationalism, mentioned in the "Derzhava" social-patriotic association's platform. A voter who espouses left-wing views obviously could not forgive Rutskoy, Skokov, or Lebed for abandoning ideals to which they had previously sworn allegiance.

Typically Russians wholly rejected the extreme nationalism of Nikolay Lysenko, whose electoral association polled just a few more votes than were needed for registration.

They also rejected the strictly religious ideas put forward by the Christian Democratic Union and the "Nur" Islamic movement, which did not even poll 1 percent of the vote. All this indicates that despite the increased clericalization of public consciousness, our people by and large remain atheists.

Now let me say a few words about the ideas of national social democracy put forward by the slogan: "If you want to live like they do in Europe, vote for us." Russians weary of promises did not believe them. Russia's social democrats still do not realize that their centrism, their uncritical aping of Western models and ways of life, are not successful. It was evidently their leaders that did the social democrats the greatest harm. The posters picturing Gavriil Popov with which the whole capital was plastered did not help. On the contrary, they even scared off voters who well remembered who had been the first to voice the ideas of the "desovietization, defederalization, and denationalization" of Soviet society. Sixty four thousand votes — that was the value put on the national social democrats.

The relative success achieved by Svyatoslav Fedorov's little- known Party of Working People's Self-Government was kind of sensational. It won over 2 million votes. That is a tribute both to the party's leader and to the actual idea of working people's self-government, which has not been implemented in Russia since the time of October but which is gradually meeting with increasing support both in Russia and the West, where working people at collective enterprises own not just the means of production but also the results of their labor and common income. This idea of people's socialism met with a response from those who do not want to turn back the clock in any form: whether it be regimented socialism or capitalism with its private ownership.

The elections by and large showed the polarization of society around "left-wing" and "right-wing" parties. Hired workers voted for the Communists and the socialists, while the "new Russians" and people wanting to become just that voted for "Russia Is Our Home", "Yabloko," and the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia.

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The definiteness or wooliness of the various electoral associations' ideas determined the success or failure of their election campaign.

Daily Studies Agrarians' Election Failure

MM2812101995 Moscow SELSKAYA ZHIZN in Russian 26 Dec 95 p 1

[Article by political observer Aleksandr Bykovskiy under the "View of Events: From Tuesday to Tuesday" rubric: "Not Only Vanya the Bull Is To Blame for the Agrarians' Failure"]

[FBIS Translated Text] When Vanya the bull was shown in the pre-election television publicity trailers for the Agrarians' former high-flyer [Ivan Rybkin], accompanied by a nameless cow, several times the author of these lines caught himself thinking that such an idyllic picture of rural life might hinder the successful election performance of the Agrarian Party of Russia [APR].

Subsequent events have shown that Vanya the bull really did chew off a piece of the agrarians' election pie. Admittedly, quite an insignificant piece, to judge from the results that I. Rybkin's bloc obtained in the course of the 17 December voting. Nevertheless, a brilliant political future awaits Ivan Petrovich at least during the coming six months (there are growing rumors in Moscow's political lobby that he is viewed as one of the most likely candidates for the post of foreign minister instead of A. Kozyrev).

If this appointment or similar ones take place, then Rybkin's former colleagues will at last receive some sensible explanation for the reasons which prompted the Kremlin to turn its gaze on a politician who had managed in a relatively short time to be in the leadership of the Communists, the socialists, and the Agrarians. In this case, however, we are interested not in the amazing political omnivorousness of Ivan Petrovich but in the substantial election failure of the Agrarians, who failed to surmount the 5-percent election barrier.

Truth to tell, even long before 17 December there was talk among the APR's supporters and, evidently, also among its leadership to the effect that the fragmented nature of political forces on the left flank of Russian society might split the electorate, as it is now fashionable to say. Let it be said in Russian: It might confuse the voters. Judge for yourselves. Left-wing slogans or slogans close to them were promoted in the elections by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation [CPRF], the APR, the "Communists-Working Russia-for the Soviet Union" bloc, N. Ryzhkov's "Power to the People" bloc, S. Fedorov's Party of Working People's Self-Government, S. Govorukhin's bloc, and many other electoral associations, among which, incidentally, it is also possible to mention "Vanya the bull." It is no wonder that such an abundance of aspirants to the role of expresser of the working people's interests made the latter's heads spin, to judge from the readers' mail to our editorial office.

I must point out that the fragmented nature of the left-wing forces did, in the end, harm them. Thus, whereas the CPRF, taking into account the voting in single-seat districts, is now in a position to control one-third of the Duma, if its actions had been coordinated more efficiently in the election campaign, the left-wing opposition would have gotten approximately 50 percent of the seats in the lower chamber of parliament. But, alas, the political ambitions of the leaders of numerous left-wing electoral associations prevailed over elementary arithmetical calculations and over common sense. Evidently, everyone was thinking of the upcoming presidential election. So it turned out that the votes of the voters who voted, for example, for the blocs of N. Ryzhkov, V. Anpilov, S. Fedorov, and S. Govorukhin were simply wasted. It is perfectly possible that it was these votes that could have enabled the APR to surmount the electoral barrier — and by a large margin.

The Agrarians' failure is also accounted for by the fact that their political views are essentially left of center. But these elections have shown that centrism — whether left or right — does not now enjoy popularity in society. In this connection the arguments of some politicians that the not unknown "Russia Is Our Home" is occupying the niche of the political center appear ridiculous. It is easy to imagine what will happen to it if its head suddenly loses his post as prime minister: The "Home's" residents will at once scatter in various directions. At the same time, in my view, the majority of them will join the Communists, whose future victory in the next presidential election is becoming increasingly likely.

Society tilted so clearly to the left in these elections that, to use M. Lapshin's figurative expression, it went right through the station called the Agrarian Party of Russia. The Russian voter evidently believes that only a political force with far more clear and comprehensible program goals than the Agrarians have can halt the state's present downfall.

Of course, all this justifies, as it were, the Agrarian Party's unsuccessful performance. But we also must not keep quiet about the mistakes that it made during the election campaign. Thus, the APR's central list included quite a few politicians who resemble star turns, as it were. Although you would think that it was clear even before the elections that in this election campaign they should on no account operate according to the scheme

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which justified itself in December 1993. Quite a few questions were also elicited by the regional lists of State Duma candidate deputies from the APR. These lists included a lot of undoubtedly meritorious people, but ones who, alas, are weighed down by the burden of past years and who would find it hard to cope with such an exacting responsibility as that of being a Duma deputy. Sometimes you even got the impression that the Agrarian Party leadership was fearful, as it were, of the excessive vigor of young people and of more dynamic cadres in its ranks.

To speak of the election campaign itself, the agrarians conducted it in an extremely sluggish and toothless manner. Of course, they had rather limited possibilities at their disposal, not comparable with the financial resources utilized, for example, by V. Chernomyrdin's and I. Rybkin's blocs. But even within the confines of the funds allocated to the Agrarians by the Central Electoral Commission to conduct the election campaign the APR leadership could have acted more decisively and purposefully. Above all, it could have not made a mess of its publicity campaign on television, as actually happened.

I am sorry to say that I did not have the heart to suggest to Agrarian Party Chairman M. Lapshin that his numerous trips to very different parts of Russia could not take the place of the persistent, daily, you could say routine, activity of the party's election staff. Alas there were noticeable hiccups in the staff's work, and Mikhail Ivanovich himself did not know how, and was probably unable, to carry the party's election campaign on his own.

It is also hard to explain the fact that in the space of two years the Agrarians have been unable to create their own so-called "shadow" cabinet, which is formed by any party which reckons on heading the government sooner or later. Particularly as the Agrarian Party has experienced, skilled cadres at its disposal.

The virtual refusal of many of the Agrarians' leaders to run in single-seat districts, where, as the elections showed, the party's chances were quite good, is also quite inexplicable. In a hard and difficult struggle 20 of its representatives managed to defeat the other competitors for deputies' seats in their districts.

Without a doubt, it also did not escape the voters' notice that during its two years in the Duma the "Agrarian Party of Russia" deputies' faction far from always took firm, aggressive stands there. The Agrarians frequently confined themselves, as it were, to the role of kind of lobbyists for the needs and concerns of the agro-industrial complex and, alas, compromised — albeit even with the best intentions — with the government, which managed to cling to power largely thanks to the Agrarians. In turn the progovernment mass media did quite a lot, as it were "in gratitude," to help the voters form a stable image of the Agrarian Party as the party of the Agrarian chiefs.

The present political situation in the country resembles to a considerable degree the first half of 1991. Now, as then, there is a clear-cut standoff between the Communists and the "democrats." Only they have swapped places, as it were. Now the "democrats" are losing abysmally, as the Communists once did, while the latter are winning equally convincingly. This is why the Agrarians' bad performance in these elections is so distressing. Both strategically and tactically the Communist Party needs a reliable and tested ally in the person of the APR. God forbid that the Communist Party, on acceding to power, should once again find itself in the role of a political monopolist. It risks losing everything again if another amorphous figure accedes to its leadership again, as in 1985. So the Communist Party needs — needs very badly — an ally with whom it could share responsibility for the state of affairs in society.

At present the Communists and Agrarians are faced with a hard and difficult struggle to save Russia and to preserve its industry and agriculture. I am sure that with the Communists' help the APR will be able to form an independent faction in the State Duma. The voice of the Russian peasant will once again resound weightily in parliament. Despite all the mistakes made by the Agrarians, no unbiased person will ever forget that it was the APR and its leaders who first made Russian politicians seriously reckon with the political potential of the countryside.

In conclusion I would like to cite some lines in a letter from Anna Yakovlevna Chernoskutova, a rural teacher with 40 years' service, from the village of Lyubimovo in Kurgan Oblast's Dalmatovskiy Rayon. She wrote the hymn of the APR. I particularly recall these words in it:

It does not fear the blows of fate.

You cannot frighten it for anything.

It takes pride in unbreakable friendship.

One for all, and all for one.

The APR has failed badly in the elections. All true supporters of the Agrarians, including the collective of our editorial office, wish that they will draw proper conclusions as quickly as possible from the election battles of December 1995 so that the party will really become an independent political force in Russian society with

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full rights. Millions of both rural folk and city folk are equally interested in this.

The following have been elected State Duma deputies for the APR in single-seat districts: 1. Birskiy No. 3 [Electoral District] — A.T. Sayfullin. 2. Tuymazinskiy No. 8 — Z.I. Sayetgaliyev. 3. Kalmytskiy No. 14 — G.V. Kulik. 4. Mariyskiy No. 18 — N.I. Polyakov. 5. Almetyevskiy No. 22 — V.S. Vernigora. [No. 6 omitted from list] 7. Kanskiy No. 47 — A.I. Yaroshenko. 8. Vladimirskiy No. 66 — G.I. Churkin. 9. Mikhaylovskiy No. 70 — V.N. Plotnikov. 10. Tulunskiy No. 83 — P.T. Burdukov. [No. 11 omitted from list] 12. Sovetskiy No. 93 — A.K. Melkov. 13. Kostromskoy No. 94 — A.G. Puzanovskiy. 14. Barabinskiy No. 124 — N.M. Kharitonov. 15. Buzulukskiy No. 131 — A.A. Chernyshev. 16. Zheleznodorozhnyy No. 135 — A.A. Rygalov. 17. Kamenskiy No. 144 — B.I. Danchenko. 18. Shilovskiy No. 150 — S.A. Yenkov. 19. Syzranskiy No. 154 — O.V. Savitskiy. 20. Borzinskiy No. 187 — V.I. Kolesnikov.

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Yeltsin Suspends Sanctions Against Former Yugoslavia

LD2812141495 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1405 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 28 (Itar-Tass) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a decree on Thursday [28 December] suspending sanctions against the Union Republic of Yugoslavia [Former Republic of Yugoslovia], the presidential press service told Itar-Tass.

According to the decree, all state agencies, industrial, trade, finance and transport enterprises, companies, banks, organisations and individuals within the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation shall act in conformity with Security Council resolution 1022 which lifted international sanctions against the rump Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) from November 22, 1995, the press service said.

Frozen Funds, Assets To Be Freed

LD2812153395 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1355 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — President Boris Yeltsin signed a directive on Thursday to suspend compliance with the measures imposed or confirmed by the U.N. Security Council against united Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and areas in Croatia that were under U.N. protection as of November 22, 1995, until further notice.

The president's directive of November 22, 1995, on measures for compliance with U.N. Security Council Resolution No.1022 on suspension of international sanctions against united Yugoslavia also says that the measures imposed under U.N. Security Council Resolution No.942 (of 1994) against the areas in Bosnia-Herzegovina controlled by the Bosnian Serbs remain in force till further notice.

Yeltsin instructed all government institutions, financial and trade organizations, industrial and transport facilities, firms, banks, organizations and individuals under Russian jurisdiction to proceed from this directive in their activity.

All the funds and assets frozen or blocked earlier in conformity with U.N. Security Council resolutions "can be freed in accordance with Russia's legislation." In the meantime the funds and assets, to which any legal claims may spread, as well as the funds belonging to individuals, companies or corporations viewed as insolvent, will remain frozen.

The measures envisaged by the president's directive will be implemented without detriment to the successor states of the former Yugoslavia, the directive says.

President Yeltsin instructed Russia's Foreign Ministry to "continue to work towards creating as soon as possible the conditions needed to totally lift the sanctions suspended under U.N. Security Council Resolution No.1022 and the present directive."

Moscow Welcomes Resumption of Direct Syrian-Israeli Talks

LD2812184995 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1721 GMT 28 Dec 95

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — Moscow welcomes the resumption of direct Syrian-Israeli talks on the outskirts of Washington, D.C. on December 27, official spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry Grigoriy Karasin said at a briefing in Moscow Thursday.

Karasin said that Russia as a co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process expects the talks to be productive and proceed with the Syrian and Israeli leaders committed to making speedy coordinated decisions on the fundamental aspects of the settlement.

"This would certainly be a large contribution to a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East," he said.

Karasin confirmed that Russia will continue making every effort to facilitate progress in the Syrian-Israeli relations.

Davydov Concludes Official Visit to Iran

Moscow Favors Wider Economic Ties

LD2812172795 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1715 GMT 28 Dec 95

[By Oleg Kuzmin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TEHRAN, December 28 (Itar-Tass) — Moscow wishes to raise the level of economic cooperation with Tehran, which will allow to strengthen political ties between the two countries, visiting Russian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Economic Relations Oleg Davydov told Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati on Thursday.

Russia considers Iran its strategic partner, neighbour, and friend, Davydov stressed. He highly assessed the prospects for bilateral economic and technical cooperation, including the implementation of joint projects.

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ITAR-TASS Carries Press Review for 29 Dec

LD2912064295 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0519 GMT 29 Dec 95

["Press Review" — ITAR-TASS headline]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 29 (Itar-Tass) — The IZVESTIYA newspaper informs its readers of a distressing situation that developed with privatisation of Russian oil companies. The daily writes about this year's last mortgage auction of the Sibneft and Nafta-Moscow companies.

Summing up the results of the auctions, the newspaper notes that shares were purchased precisely by those to whom they had been initially promised behind the scenes.

Under the headline "Will specialists from crack commando units, forgotten by the present authorities, be a buttress for the new power?", IZVESTIYA deals with topics discussed at a meeting of veterans of the Alfa, Vympel and Vityaz elite units of the former Soviet KGB.

The daily writes that "they may still be of great assistance at a critical moment by professionally watching events, analysing and forecasting them".

The ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA newspaper carries an article by Social Protection Minister Lyudmila Bezlepkina. According to the minister, 37 million people are waiting for a timely pay of their pensions. The author notes that "planned work is well underway to reform the pension system".

IZVESTIYA front-pages an interview with paratrooper Colonel Aleksey Lebed, a member of the State Duma (Russian parliament lower house) and brother of retired General Alexander Lebed, a former commander of the 14th Russian army in the self-proclaimed Dniester Moldavian Republic.

Lebed, junior, claims that he shares ideas of his elder brother. However, according to the newspaper, their views do not coincide in everything. "The main thing in my programme is no blood, all problems should be settled only by evolution," Lebed said.

Officers of the St.Petersburg organised crime department nabbed "authors" of a message to Mayor Anatoliy Sobchak which was left at a cloak-room. The suspects demanded 750,000 U.S. dollars from the mayor. Otherwise, they threatened to stage a series of terrorist acts in the second largest city of Russia.

More than 1,000 people blocked traffic on the Moscow-Gomel railway in the Bryansk Region, the RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA newspaper reports. According to the newspaper, "hunger prodded them to this step of disperation".

There is no work in a village struck by radiation, and authorities do not pay Chernobyl allowances. There were clashes with police. Some protesters were injured. Authorities managed to calm down rioters. However, the striking committee does not preclude a chance that the blockade of the railway will be resumed.

Yuriy Snegiryov, a candidate from the Beer Lovers Party on its federal list, writes in IZVESTIYA about reasons for an ignominious defeat of his party at the December 17 general elections.

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Moscow Welcomes Resumption of Direct Syrian-Israeli Talks

LD2812184995 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1721 GMT 28 Dec 95

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — Moscow welcomes the resumption of direct Syrian-Israeli talks on the outskirts of Washington, D.C. on December 27, official spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry Grigoriy Karasin said at a briefing in Moscow Thursday.

Karasin said that Russia as a co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process expects the talks to be productive and proceed with the Syrian and Israeli leaders committed to making speedy coordinated decisions on the fundamental aspects of the settlement.

"This would certainly be a large contribution to a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East," he said.

Karasin confirmed that Russia will continue making every effort to facilitate progress in the Syrian-Israeli relations.

Davydov Concludes Official Visit to Iran

Moscow Favors Wider Economic Ties

LD2812172795 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1715 GMT 28 Dec 95

[By Oleg Kuzmin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TEHRAN, December 28 (Itar-Tass) — Moscow wishes to raise the level of economic cooperation with Tehran, which will allow to strengthen political ties between the two countries, visiting Russian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Economic Relations Oleg Davydov told Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati on Thursday.

Russia considers Iran its strategic partner, neighbour, and friend, Davydov stressed. He highly assessed the prospects for bilateral economic and technical cooperation, including the implementation of joint projects.

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The Caspian Sea "belongs only to the five coastal states." No other state can interfere into the regional affairs, Davydov and Velayati stressed.

They also said that some of the countries cannot exploit its biological and mineral resources before the Caspian legal status is established.

During his talks with Iranian Economics and Finance Minister Morteza Mohammad-Khan, Davydov expressed confidence that the creation of a joint economic commission, already agreed upon, will open a new page in technical and economical bilateral cooperation.

Davydov met Iran's First Vice President Hassan Habibi also on Thursday.

Joint Communique Issued

LD2812230195 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 2150 GMT 28 Dec 95

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Oleg Kuzmin]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran, 29 Dec (ITAR-TASS) — Iran and Russia are satisfied with the dynamic development of bilateral relations. This is said in a joint communique, the signing of which has concluded an official three-day visit to Iran by Oleg Davydov, a Russian deputy prime minister and the minister of foreign economic relations. The two parties noted "a common wish to solve all problems in the spirit of good-neighborliness and mutual understanding and make the bilateral cooperation a lasting and mutually beneficial partnership based on equality and resistant to the third countries' influence."

The visit resulted in Davydov and Morteza Mohammad-Khani, Iranian minister of economic affairs and finance, initialling a protocol on long-term economic cooperation between Russia Federation and Iran. The protocol outlines the major directions and specific projects of future cooperation between the two countries. The protocol is expected to be signed by the heads of state.

Davydov and Mohammad-Khani also signed an intergovernmental protocol on settling financial accounts and an interbank agreement on the procedures of making payments.

The talks in Tehran noted the coincidence and proximity of Russia's and Iran's positions on regional and international issues. The two parties' common approach toward the problem of the Caspian Sea was reaffirmed in the spirit of the joint statement on the Caspian Sea of 30 October 1995.

Moscow To Continue Providing Humanitarian Aid to Iraq

LD2812184795 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1721 GMT 28 Dec 95

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — Russia intends to continue contributing to Iraq's fulfillment of U.N. security Council resolutions, which would help ease sanctions against Iraq and eventually lift them completely, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin told a briefing in Moscow Thursday.

At the same time, Russia will use available resources to alleviate the hardships of the Iraqi people by providing humanitarian aid, said Karasin.

He recalled that the Russian Emergency Situations Ministry sent a large amount of humanitarian goods to Iraq via Jordan, including 7,500 kilograms of medicine and 19,500 kilograms of confectionery as presents to children.

Russia is seriously concerned about the humanitarian situation in Iraq, Karasin said.

It is important that the U.N. sanctions Committee, which takes decisions on such supplies to Iraq, fully takes into account the difficult humanitarian situation in the country, said Karasin.

Moscow Condemns Zagreb for Humanitarian Violations

LD2812184595 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1721 GMT 28 Dec 95

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — Russia regards as unprecedented the Croatian authorities' gross and mass violations of humanitarian norms in the Serb-populated areas of Krajina cited by the U.N. secretary-general in his latest report, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Grigoriy Karasin told a briefing in Moscow Thursday.

According to Karasin, "this information is especially important, because it was collected by the U.N. personnel and other international institutions of much authority."

The U.N. security Council adopted a statement condemning the Croatian violations on December 22 at Russia's initiative, he said.

Russian Ambassador to the U.N. Sergey Lavrov submitted a draft resolution of the U.N. Security Council on

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Zagreb's violations of humanitarian norms and human rights to the Contact Group for Bosnia on the same day.

Slovak Premier Addresses Moscow Press Conference

MM2912095495 Moscow TRUD in Russian 27 Dec 95 p 5

[Report by Sergey Muravyev: "Street Named Bratislava Street"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A new street — Bratislava Street — will soon appear on the Moscow map. This was the decision reached by Vladimir Meciar, chairman of the Slovak Government, and Moscow Mayor Yuriy Luzhkov. It will not only be a symbol of good-neighborly relations between our peoples but also a kind of business and trade center for Slovak entrepreneurs, who will site their stores and offices there.

At a press conference in the Slovak Embassy to mark Vladimir Meciar's investiture with a Moscow State University honorary doctorate for his tremendous personal contribution to the development of Slovak-Russian relations there was talk of a new phase and of the prospects for economic, scientific, and technical cooperation between our two countries.

The Slovak premier described the state of our relations as follows:

"To date over 70 intergovernmental agreements have been concluded. I can say that the treaty-legal base for Russian-Slovak relations is virtually complete. We are now organizing a new system of economic cooperation that complies with mutual sovereignty, mutual benefit, and the principles of free trade. Slovakia's business circles are interested in broadening and deepening trade with Russia in the long term. In the first 10 months of the past year imports from the Russian Federation totaled $1.166 billion and exports to your country stood at $255.3 million. Let me add that 1 October our republic switched to a fully convertible national currency — the Slovak koruna — which will now ease mutual settlements in many respects.

"Energy sources and raw materials make up almost 86 percent of Russian imports: oil, gas, coal, and iron ore, as well as synthetic rubber, nonferrous metals, chemical products, timber, paper....

"Machinery, equipment, rolled metal, medical equipment, tires, electrical equipment, footwear and clothing, and food accounts for a considerable proportion of Slovakia's exports to your country. Late this year an agreement on long-term shipments of Kemerovo coal was signed and a joint Russian-Slovak tire production enterprise has opened in Omsk Oblast. We hope that 1996 will be even more successful for everyone since we do after all have reliable, interesting partners in Russia."

Russian Vice Premier Yuriy Yarov, who also spoke at the press conference, underlined the real need to restore and further deepen the former trade and economic ties between Russia and Slovakia.

"We realize how important our relations are not only for one another, they do after all set a good example for all the countries of East Europe, an example of how we can and should cooperate in the new political and economic conditions.

"An exhibition of Slovak goods was recently held here at the embassy. There were plenty of goods among them with which Russian consumers have long been well-acquainted, but which they are regrettably now unable to buy. Direct ties are more essential than ever today. We will do everything that we can to ensure that they develop. We will also do our utmost to promote investments by Russia entrepreneurs and commercial and banking structures in the economy of the Slovak Republic and vice versa.

"A new year, 1996, is coming. Slovakia will celebrate the third anniversary of its independence 1 January. We wish its people — our old and dear neighbor — prosperity, peace, and happiness."

Moscow Favors Cessation of Nuclear Testing

LD2812184395 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1721 GMT 28 Dec 95

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — Russia is in favor of "stopping nuclear testing, in the Pacific Ocean as well," Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Panov said in an interview with Interfax Thursday. He was commenting on information stating that France had carried out another explosion, the fifth in number, on one of the atolls in the Pacific Ocean.

For his part, Russia's Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin said in an interview with Interfax that "Russia is not indifferent to this problem."

Karasin recalled that concerns related to the resumption of nuclear testing by Paris was discussed by Russian and French President Boris Yeltsin and Jacques Chirac during their meeting this October.

"The French party knows our position, it has not changed since that time," Karasin underlined.

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Russia, the United States, and Great Britain adhere to a moratorium on all kinds of nuclear testing. Out of the "five nuclear powers" China, along with France, continues nuclear testing.

Embassy Urges Investigation of Delhi Airport Incident

LD2812164195 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1541 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — The Russian embassy in Delhi is pressing for a full investigation into the incident involving a Russian An-26 plane at Delhi airport and for punishment of those responsible for it, official spokesman for the Foreign Ministry Grigoriy Karasin said at a briefing in Moscow Thursday.

The Indian authorities ordered the plane, operated by the Kazan Helicopter Factory, to land in Delhi on December 24. The chartered plane was flying from Kazan to Kathmandu via Karachi with a load of spares for an Mi-8 helicopter rented in Nepal.

Although the crew had a permit to fly over India, the authorities told them to land, alleging that they had none, Karasin said.

The Indian authorities allowed the flight to continue on December 27. "The police apologized verbally for the incident. India paid all the expenses for the crew's stay and plane servicing in Delhi. The plane was supposed to take off from Delhi Thursday morning and is probably in Kathmandu by now," Karasin continued.

"Formally, the incident is over but one's impression is that it resulted from over-suspicion and over-zeal of the Indian special services following the forced landing in Bombay of an An-26 of a New Zealand company which is believed to have dropped a cargo of weaponry in the northeast of India."

Moscow Hails Cuba Signing Amendments to Tlatelolco Treaty

LD2812185195 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1721 GMT 28 Dec 95

[From the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — According to Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigoriy Karasin, Russia has consistently supported the additional protocol to the treaty banning nuclear weapons in Latin America (Tlatelolco Treaty) and it hails the fact that Cuba has begun signing amendments to the document.

"We see this step as a confirmation of Cuba's intentions for constructive participation in the non-nuclear area in Latin America. It contributes to the strengthening of the international regime of nuclear nonproliferation," said Karasin.

Official on Possible Fishing Agreement With Japan

LD2812154195 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1513 GMT 28 Dec 95

[By Andrey Varlamov and Andrey Kirillov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 28 (Itar-Tass) — Moscow and Tokyo will probably be "able to work out some basic parameters of an agreement" on fishing cooperation in the South Kurils zone before Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono's visit to Russia, which he is expected to undertake in 1996. This prognosis was made to Itar-Tass by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Panov.

He said that the Russian side "does not think that the entire agreement on Japanese fishing in the South Kurils zone can be drawn up by the time of Kono's visit", because it "may include not one, but several documents". "However, the latest rounds of the inter- government talks on this problem show that, nevertheless, definite headway was made in this direction and, maybe, we shall be able to reach some sort of an agreement on the main agreement before the arrival of the Japanese minister, while the accompanying documents will be drawn up later," the diplomat pointed out.

Panov also said that preparations for the first meeting of the Inter-Government Commission for Commercial, Economic, Scientific, and Technological Cooperation, planned to be held during the stay of the Japanese foreign minister in Moscow "are proceeding quite successfully" and "we do not see any problems". Kono heads the Japanese part of the commission, and First Vice-Premier Oleg Soskovets is his Russian partner in the commission.

Moscow Disagrees With Caspian Sea Draft Convention

LD2812192295 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1808 GMT 28 Dec 95

[By Vladimir Suprun]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 28 (Itar-Tass) — The Russian side cannot in any way agree with the draft convention worked out in Almaty on the legal status of the Caspian sea, which presupposes the division of the Caspian sea as the legal international means of the settlement of this problem, says a note

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by the Russian Foreign Ministry addressed to the Kazakh Foreign Ministry, a briefing was told today by spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry Grigoriy Karasin.

The note says that no state borders have ever existed and exist now in the Caspian sea and that no part of the sea has been under jurisdiction of any state and that it does not belong to the territory of any state. The Caspian sea is open for use by any state throughout its entire space. Attempts to artificially divide this water reservoir possessing single ecological system into separate parts is not the way which might ensure reliability and predictability of the situation in the Caspian sea, the document said.

At the same time, the Russian side expressed its readiness to continue consultations with representatives of Kazakhstan and other Caspian states to reach harmony in meeting the interests of all Caspian states and ensure constructive cooperation between them in the spirit of friendship and good neighborly relations, the document said.

Project To Transport Oil to PRC To Cost $8 Million

LD2812193595 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1731 GMT 28 Dec 95

[By diplomatic correspondents Aleksandr Korzun, Igor Porshnev, Yevgeniy Terekhov, and others; from the "Diplomatic Panorama" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — Tentative costs of the project to develop and transport Russian oil and gas through Mongolia to China and further are estimated at $8 million, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Panov has said.

He confirmed that a framework agreement would be concluded in the course of President Yeltsin's forthcoming visit to China.

Panov said that Japan and South Korea would take part in developing oil and gas fields in Sakhalin, Yakutia and Irkutsk.

Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev earlier said that President Yeltsin's first foreign visit in 1996 would be to China. Originally it was scheduled for 1995 and had to be postponed due to President Yeltsin's illness.

In Shanghai, a five-nation agreement on confidence-building measures on borders will be signed by Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Panov said.

PRC Military Delegation Visits Far East Region

LD2912084995 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0840 GMT 29 Dec 95

[By Yevgenia Lents]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] VLADIVOSTOK, December 29 (Itar-Tass) — The visit of representatives from the Jilin Provincinal Military Area of the Chinese Army, who arrived here today, will be devoted to the promotion of interaction between the Russian and Chinese borderguard services.

Officers of the Russian Pacific Borderguard Area believe that this visit testifies to the sincere desire of the Chinese side to promote next year mutual understanding and good-neighbour relations with the bordering Russian territories, especially the Maritime and Khabarovsk Territories.

Itar-Tass was told at the Press Centre of the Pacific Borderguard Area that the Chinese delegation, led by Commander of the Jilin Military Area Major-General Liu Chanfu would have talks with the Command of the Pacific Borderguard Area on the possibility of pooling the efforts of the two sides in the protection of some sections of the border. The Chinese military will also meet leaders of the Maritime Territory, which is one of China's most active trade partners in the Russian Federation.

Daily Comments on NATO Plan To 'Destroy' Slavs

MM2812145995 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 27 Dec 95 p 3

[Article by Vitaliy Korionov: "And This Is Our 'Partner?'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Kremlin regime is making truly desperate efforts in an attempt to preserve at least something of Russia's former international positions. As they thrash around, the regime's high-ranking representatives are even turning their gaze toward those whose main aim has been and remains to bring Russia down to the position of a semicolony. The Russian defense minister is particularly zealous here, going so far as to declare that the "defender of Russia's interests is... NATO.

Soon after the 1991 counterrevolutionary coup in Moscow the respectable U.S. magazine FOREIGN AFFAIRS published a long article by Zbigniew Brzezinski in which the author gave the American assessment of recent events and outlined the contours of Washington's policy in the new situation.

The cold war, the venerable U.S. political scientist declared exultantly, ended in complete victory for the

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United States. Gorbachev accepted the winners' terms. "This was the functional equivalent of the capitulation in the railroad car in Compiegne in 1918 or on the U.S. destroyer Missouri in September 1945."

"The unity of Russia itself," Brzezinski declared, "could also soon be under question." And he noted what the United States should do next. He said they were right, in undermining the communist regimes, to begin with Poland, "which was promoted by the election of the first Polish pope." But they should go further. There should follow "vigorous Western support for the Baltic-Black Sea zone," and then "Ukraine should be stabilized...." The outcome of these and other efforts should be "the final collapse of communism." "But these impressive aims," Brzezinski instructed us, "will be fulfilled only if the West demonstrates firm strategic might."

But among the Washington ruling elite not everyone has been extolling the cult of crude military strength. James Baker, former U.S. secretary of state, for instance, has advised against spurning universal levers designed to maintain universal peace and international security such as the Conference (still called the Conference then, and not the Organization) on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations.

But sensible voices were drowned in the chorus of those who had embarked on a course toward the destruction of international cooperation. And their efforts are bearing fruit. The most graphic evidence of this is the fire of war blazing in one of Europe's most vulnerable regions — the Balkans — onto which the Russian foreign minister is virtually throwing firewood. As a result the United Nations, counter to common sense, has found itself in fact... a warring side against the Serbs.

Across the ocean the upper hand has been taken by forces whose "philosophy" was clearly formulated in the document "Transformed Atlantic Alliance" ["preobrazhennyy Atlanticheskiy soyuz"] published after the above-mentioned policy article by Z. Brzezinski. The authors of this "work" were the former U.S. representative in the United Nations David Abshire, former U.S. ambassador to the FRG Robert Burt, and James Wolsey, who by that time had completed his activity as head of the U.S. delegation at the talks on nuclear and space weapons in Geneva. These three "yesterday's men" proclaimed that the United States should, after the destruction of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact Organization, take a "bold and mighty leap" whose thrust was formulated with extreme frankness: "We need a guard dog and NATO is the logical candidate for the role."

The main avenue of this "guard dog's" activity was also defined without hesitation. Here too the newfound peacemakers advanced along a well-worn path. As we know, the decisive aim which the Hitlerites set themselves was to destroy or enslave the Slav peoples and primarily the Russians, Poles, Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Serbs. The machinery for destroying the Serbs, for instance, was set in full motion by the Hitlerites and the Ustasi: They destroyed 900,000 Serbs. But the Serb nation survived — like other peoples of Europe it was saved by the liberating Red Army. Now the transatlantic organizers of the "new world order" — the Americans and their Muslim-Croat henchmen have now set about the dark deed of destroying the courageous freedom-loving Serb people. It is here that the Pentagon "brass hats" are trying out their latest "Tomahawks."

But to all appearances this is only a stage toward the implementation of the Washington "hawks'" more far-reaching plans. Their main target is Russia.

The destruction of the Soviet Union prepared by Gorbachev's policy and implemented by Yeltsin with his accomplices has created for the NATO strategists a situation of which they could not conceive in their most glorious dreams. The bastion which barred the way to the latter-day hegemonists has been broken. In place of a single great power which ensured a period of 50 years of peace, unprecedented in European history, there is now something like a series of stumps deprived of any real opportunity successfully to defend their national rights and the interests of European and international peace.

The unprecedented destruction of the Russian economy, the collapse of the Armed Forces which only recently pulverized fascism's most powerful war machine, the profound spiritual crisis of society, the drastic activation of centrifugal forces, the unprecedented decline in Russia's clout in the world arena, Moscow's actual international isolation — all this opens up before the owners of the "guard dog" previously inconceivable opportunities for implementing their age-old designs — blowing up the post-Soviet area into pieces. The destruction of that area, Pierre Beart, an analyst of international problems, joyfully exclaimed in his book "Geopolitics for Europe" [Geopolitika dlya Yevropy] will henceforth proceed "in concentric circles!"

The "push to the East" — that is what has become the slogan for the NATO leaders. Former FRG Defense Minister Manfred Woerner who until recently held the post of NATO secretary general (the same man whom the Western press calls the "godfather" of the "partnership for peace" program) has declared: "The key element in NATO's transformation is the extension of its influence to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the new independent republics of the former Soviet Union."

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The North Atlantic bloc ringleaders have decided that the preparatory stage is ending and the time is coming for the direct involvement of the countries of the former Warsaw Pact Organization in the NATO military system and the approach of their military machine right up to Russia's open Western borders. The only question is how long it will take and in particular of how Russian voters vote at the forthcoming presidential elections (if they take place, of course). If the Moscow "throne" is taken by a politician who suits Washington 100 percent then NATO troops and nuclear weapons will be brought up to Russia's borders somewhat later and if not then they will be brought up in the very near future. The schedule for their deployment in this part of the continent has been drawn up, the mechanism has been set in motion, and the watch has been started.

There are two elements to which I think special attention should be drawn.

First, the present Moscow regime is in fact pushing the countries which used to make up the Warsaw Pact toward joining NATO. Just a year ago Foreign Minister Kozyrev described the Polish course toward joining NATO as "the exhumation of ideas smelling of mothballs." What was Europe's surprise when a few days later it read a communique signed by B. Yeltsin after his visit to Warsaw which stated in black and white that the Russian side had voiced "understanding" at Poland's intention to join NATO. Yet it thereby gave the "go-ahead" to the Czech Republic, Hungary, and other former allies of ours to join this bloc! So should the Russian president now engage in arm-twisting and go into hysterics?

But the matter was not restricted to the statement in Warsaw. The war in Chechnya and our military men's deeds there provided new propaganda fodder for those foreign forces which are howling about "Russian crimes." Yet is that propaganda not being assisted by the irresponsibility which reigns in the Russia of Yeltsin and Grachev with regard to the safekeeping of nuclear arsenals?

Second, the Atlanticists have no intention of restricting themselves to throwing NATO's net over the countries which used to belong to the Warsaw Pact. Now it is already a case of tying the Baltic countries, Ukraine, and perhaps Moldova and even some of the former union republics of the Transcaucasus to the NATO wheel. You only have to recall a few facts from the past few months. U.S.-Ukrainian military exercises were held in the region of Odessa, Nikolayev, and Lvov. The activity of the U.S. Navy has increased considerably in the waters of the Black Sea. Estonian military seamen took part in NATO exercises in the Baltic. Pentagon generals have become frequent guests in Lithuania. Their golden braid is glittering on the streets of Tbilisi, and so forth.

Special mention should be made of the vitally important region for Russia that is Kaliningrad Oblast. They are planning to cancel out Russia's efforts over the course of three centuries to entrench itself on this natural border. There has been an obvious plan to deprive Russians of this last major port on the Baltic. Certain circles have already started talking about the so-called demilitarization of the oblast. Russia's patriotic forces would be acting wisely and far-sightedly if they were to pay timely attention to these intrigues by our enemies. Let us not forget that one of the Hitlerites' first steps consisted in aggressive actions in the Baltic zone.

Present-day Germany — an undoubted economic giant of the Western world — is still building its economic muscle. But that is today, what about tomorrow? The U.S. newspaper THE INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, toughing on the developing process of "the German economic colonization of Eastern Europe," noted that in former Czechoslovakia alone out of over 3,000 joint ventures one third have been created with German firms. And the newspaper meaningfully added: "Germany will change the new Europe as it sees fit."

Indeed, take a look at the present development of events in the Balkans. Bonn took an active part in the collapse of Yugoslavia. It was Bonn which insisted on immediate international recognition for Croatia and Bosnia. The German Nazis serving in the military formation on Croatian territory are flaunting the fascist swastika on the streets of the cities there. But the main thing is that German "Tornadoes" are already flying over Yugoslav sky and Clinton's representative has declared meaningfully the start of the NATO operation involving 60,000 troops. An operation against the Slavs, an operation to occupy the Balkans.

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Political Issues

Yeltsin Begins Work in Kremlin; To Film New Year TV Address

LD2912082695 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 0813 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 29 (Itar-Tass) — President Yeltsin begins to work in the Kremlin today after staying for some time in his country residence in Barvikha, Tass learned today from sources in the president's staff. Today it is planned to film a traditional New Year TV address of the president to the nation, which will be broadcast on the night of December 31.

Late in October Yeltsin was hospitalized at the Central Clinical Hospital because of the aggravation of the ischemic heart disease and later took a rehabilitation course at the Barvikha sanatorium. Several days ago he moved from the sanatorium to his country residence.

Meets Public, Sets Out Main Policy Lines

LD2912110995 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1058 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 29 (Itar-Tass) — President Yeltsin said today during his conversation with a group of Muscovites at the Cathedral Square of the Kremlin that he would announce early in February whether or not he would run for presidency for the next term. He told them that he had resumed his work in the Kremlin today. Until today the president was staying in his country residence after medical treatment at the Central Clinical Hospital and rehabilitation at the Barvikha sanatorium.

The president assured the Muscovites that there were no grounds for concern over the future of the reform in connection with the political make-up of the new State Duma. "Do not worry about it, all will go well. We shall not allow anybody to move back. Patriotism and moral strength of Russians will help us. We have had enough experiments. Russians are fed up with them," Yeltsin said.

"In 1996 we should improve the situation in the social sphere," the president continued. "This year the economic situation stabilized. We are getting out of the crisis. The growth of industrial output, economic development, the consolidation of finances and the improvement of living standards of the population, meaning all sections of the population, are expected in 1996."

Responding to the question of Interfax, Yeltsin said that he would not resume at once his normal working schedule with 18 hours of work every day. "I should not wear myself out the way I did before. At the sanatorium I also worked for four to five hours every day, but it was not a proper working day for the president," he said.

Touching upon the forthcoming visits to other countries, Yeltsin said that he intended to visit China and Norway in March and April. It is planned to sign some 20 agreements in China. Aside from Beijing, Yeltsin is going to visit Shanghai.

"We shall develop good relations not only with the West, but also with the East. This will make out present policy more balanced. We should not allow to accuse Russia of turning towards the West. We want to make friends with everybody and to trade with everybody on mutually beneficial terms," the president said.

Holds Working Meeting With Aides

LD2912110695 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1048 GMT 29 Dec 95

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 29 Dec (ITAR-TASS) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who resumed work in the Kremlin today, held a working meeting with all his aides, ITAR-TASS was told by Sergey Medvedev, the Russian head of state's press secretary.

Sergey Medvedev, who took part in the meeting, said that current policy issues were discussed. "The widest range of issues of domestic political and international life were discussed." The president and his aides briefly summed up the results of the outgoing year, the press secretary noted.

Yeltsin Discusses Main Political Events of Year

LD2912113795 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1108 GMT 29 Dec 95

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Tamara Zamyatina and Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 29 Dec (ITAR-TASS) — Elections to the State Duma were the main political event in Russia in 1995, Russian President Boris Yeltsin said in answer to questions asked by ITAR-TASS today. Among "global events of interstate level" in the outgoing year Boris Yeltsin singled out the 50th anniversary of the United Nations and "the breakthrough" in resolving one of the most serious regional conflicts, that in Bosnia.

"Speaking about myself, the president said, the birth of my grandson was a great event and a source of immense happiness for me.

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"'Now I am a grandfather four times over,'" the Russian head of state stressed.

The president was voicing his opinion on the main events of the outgoing year within the framework of the New Year poll conducted by ITAR-TASS among leading Russian politicians.

Yeltsin, Rybkin Discuss First Meeting of New Duma

LD2812144295 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1426 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 28 (Itar-Tass) — President Boris Yeltsin will most likely rule that the first meeting of the newly elected State Duma (lower house of the Russian parliament) be held on January 16, Ivan Rybkin, speaker of the current Duma, told reporters on Thursday after his meeting with Yeltsin.

Rybkin said that the meeting was devoted to issues related to preparations for the first meeting of the new Duma.

Yeltsin Tells Premier To 'Strengthen' Economics Ministry

LD2812144995 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1440 GMT 28 Dec 95

[By Andrey Shtorkh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW December 28 (Itar-Tass) — President Boris Yeltsin, angered by what he said was "sabotage" of his decisions by the Economics ministry, gave his Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin two days on Thursday [28 December] to "strengthen the leadership of the ministry" which is a clear signal for a reshuffle in the leading reform body.

"President Boris Yeltsin instructed today the head of the government, Viktor Chernomyrdin to submit in two days proposals on strengthening the leadership of the Russian Economics ministry and on dismissing the saboteurs", presidential spokesman Sergey Medvedev told Tass adding that the Finance ministry will also be checked.

The spokesman explained that the reason was the ignoration [as received] of Yeltsin's instruction to launch the production of new agricultural machinery at the combine harvester plant in the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk which the president visited in the summer of 1994 and which voted overwhelmingly for communists and nationalists at the recent State Duma elections.

The government then instructed the Economics and Finance ministries to envisage state subsidies for the enterprise in 1995 and to include it into the state investment programme.

"Neither this resolution, not the subsequent instructions of the premier and his deputies have been fulfilled", Medvedev said and explained that the Krasnoyarsk plant was not included into the investment programme for 1995-1996.

"The President is extremely worried by the state of the discipline of all state officials. Boris Yeltsin believes strict and tough exactingness is required from each of them, regardless of the position", Medvedev said adding that this concerns all state servants.

Yeltsin Congratulates Emergency Situations Ministry

LD2812194495 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1812 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin congratulated the personnel of the Emergency Situations Ministry Thursday on the five year anniversary of its foundation and the Rescue Workers Day.

First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets read out a presidential message at a solemn assembly in the ministry Thursday evening.

"The country will need this service which guards people's lives and is much-needed for the normal functioning of industry and the whole economy," Soskovets said.

It was from an Emergency Situations Ministry rescue point that people could get heat, bread and water in the virtually destroyed city of Groznyy in February 1995, Soskovets recalled, adding that it was rescue workers who hurried to help residents of the quake-hit town of Neftegorsk and saved over 400 lives.

Kozyrev Resignation Predicted To Be 'Deferred'

MK2812155095 Moscow NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA in Russian 28 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Mikhail Karpov under the "Foreign Policy" rubric: "Yeltsin Received Kozyrev After All and Gave Him a Few Assignments"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Many people have become accustomed to the fact that the Russian Foreign Ministry's plans are constantly changing. But yesterday they must have been altered by the president in a such drastic fashion that the earlier announced news conference had to be canceled.

Andrey Kozyrev himself, fully in the spirit of Soviet diplomacy, assessed the atmosphere of his meeting with

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Boris Yeltsin as "cordial" and said that his personal future would be discussed again once Yeltsin is finally back in his Kremlin residence. The results of the rendezvous appear to be as follows.

It seems that Andrey Kozyrev's dreams of remaining the head of Russian diplomacy until the end of Yeltsin's presidential term are not destined to come true. Such ambitions of his appear to have been nourished by his desire to remain forever on the list of Yeltsin's allies, not by his firm resolve to continue the policy he had once charted.

There is a clear calculation behind it. The president is a democrat. The minister, too, is a democrat. The president fought the communists after he had stopped being one. So did the minister. The president took care of peace. So did the minister. Is it so important that in so doing he sometimes forgot about his country's interests? So what, even Rabin had been accused of that. In short, a place in history — not only Russian, but also international history — is assured.

Numerous and longtime opponents of the current foreign minister think that the president's decisions have long been overdue. Sergey Karaganov, deputy director of the Europe Institute, for instance, is certain that any Russian president, however capable he might be and whatever foreign minister he might have, would not be able to ensure foreign policy coordination in the absence of a mechanism enabling him actually to carry it out.

From now on, thanks to presidential edicts, this mechanism will be oiled as promised. Inside the Foreign Policy Council, about which NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA reported yesterday, a special administration will be set up to be headed, it is said, by Dmitriy Ryurikov, presidential foreign policy adviser. Moreover, there is a general view that from now on presidential aides should in principle meet more often.

As reported, at his meeting with Kozyrev Yeltsin also discussed other matters of principle, such as whether one person can wear two mutually exclusive hats. Or the schedule of his own trips and the possibility of holding a meeting on nuclear security matters according to the G-7 + Russia formula in Moscow.

Kozyrev reported to Yeltsin about the Foreign Ministry's efforts to liberate the crew of the Il-76 that has been held by the Afghan "Taliban" movement in Qandahar. The minister was tasked to see the matter through and to visit Pakistan in the bargain. This may indicate that Kozyrev's resignation, which has been desired by so many people, may be deferred. In which case those anticipating his post to be vacated will have to wait. Possibly, they will not have to wait long.

One more point should also be emphasized, namely, the stoicism with which Kozyrev himself commented on the events of the past few days. In his words, it is not a matter of sidelining the Foreign Ministry or infringing on its prerogatives in any way. Yes, including with regard to the coordination of foreign policy activity. According to Kozyrev, the ministry will go on playing the central part as it has always done.

More on Chernomyrdin Remarks at Government Session

MM2912101195 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 29 Dec 95 p 2

[Report by Vladimir Kucherenko under the "In the Russian Federation Government" rubric: "The Year Inspires Optimism"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Russian Federation Government yesterday held its last session for the current year. Premier V. Chernomyrdin summed up some of the results.

In his opinion, the government has ended the year with good results, despite the economic and political complications. There were, of course, some failures, miscalculations, and mistakes. But we should not forget the positive features which distinguish 1995 from 1993-1994.

According to the head of government, we have seen a stabilization in production and the lowest price rises since 1992, citizens' real incomes are being restored, and the gold and foreign currency reserves are increasing. The premier is convinced that the economy has reached a qualitatively new level, the wholesale market is functioning, the practice of privatization has been refined, control is being established over natural monopolies, and the impact of seasonal inflation factors has been reduced. Thus, 1995 was the first year without a surge of inflation in the fall caused by the agrarian campaign and the shipment of commodities to the north. In V. Chernomyrdin's opinion, the banking system is perfectly stable and the country's budget has for the first time been adopted before the start of the new fiscal year.

Work will be equally tense next year, and the main point is that there will be a focusing on social affairs. There are opportunities to improve matters in that sphere, even though the resources are not all that great.

The premier is convinced that the election of the new State Duma, which became a landmark in Russian history, will preserve the political conditions for continuing the course of economic and democratic transformations. The election of Russian Federation president lie ahead,

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and Viktor Chernomyrdin holds that "We must function as a single team, and this is how we will function."

The same session considered the drafts of the federal targeted program for the development of exports, elaborated by the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations, and the "Fuel and Energy" program submitted by the Ministry of Fuel and Energy. They are both geared to the 1996-2000 period. The premier expressed overall approval of these documents, but did note that they are not adequately coordinated with the government's action program for 1996. If plans are to be fulfilled, they must correspond with the realities of life, and therefore both documents were sent back for additional work over a three-week period.

The fate of the draft program for stabilization and development of the agro-industrial complex in 1996-2000, proposed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Ministry of the Economy, was somewhat different. V. Chernomyrdin noted that the document obviously lacked coordination and had not been properly prepared. He believes that the program is too ambitious and patently doomed to fail. The premier warned leaders of their responsibility for the proposed plans. On Vice Premier A. Zaveryukha's insistence, the consideration of the agrarian program was postponed until 25 January.

Chubays Warns Opposition May Try To Reverse Reforms

LD2812194395 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1812 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — The opposition elected to the Russian State Duma will try to reverse economic reforms in the first half of 1996, Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoliy Chubays told journalists in Moscow Thursday.

"I can clearly see the serious political forces which want to reverse all that has been done in the past four years," he said.

However, unlike the political promises that let the Communists win the parliamentary elections, economic decisions will entail responsibility, said Chubays. A decision to fix prices, for example, will in three months lead to a disintegration of industries which produce goods with fixed prices, he said.

"Any economic decision has consequences which our opponents do not imagine. My optimism in this sense is based on the fact that the economy itself can punish those who try to destroy it," said Chubays.

Speaking about possible attempts by the opposition to make him resign, Chubays said that such rumors have been circulating during all of the past four years and that he always worked as if it were his "last day, trying to do as much as possible."

Communists To Join Government If Economic Policy Changes

LD2812141195 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1311 GMT 28 Dec 95

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Tamara Zamyatina]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 28 Dec (ITAR-TASS) — Valentin Kuptsov, the first deputy chairman of the Russian Communist Party Central Committee, said in an interview with ITAR-TASS today that "the communists can consider proposals to join the Russian Government only if economic policies are changed." This was Valentin Kuptsov's reaction to a statement made by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin in an interview with ITAR-TASS that "it cannot be ruled out that professionals from among the communists might join the government."

In response to a request from the ITAR-TASS correspondent that he should be more specific about what the Russian Federation Communist Party meant by "changes in policy," Valentin Kuptsov said: "We are placing the following conditions before Viktor Chernomyrdin's cabinet: a fundamental change in social policy, the restoration of social guarantees, and a revision of the results of privatization, which was carried out in violation of the laws."

According to Valentin Kuptsov, "The Russian Communist Party Central Committee is preparing an extensive interpretation of these conditions, the implementation of which may lead the communists to join the current government."

Valentin Kuptsov is convinced that "the electorate, 20 million of whom voted for the Russian Federation Communist Party and the blocs of Viktor Anpilov and Nikolay Ryzhkov, are rejecting the government's current economic policies." Moreover, Kuptsov stated that he could see the possibility of a consolidation of the supporters of his party not only with Ryzhkov's bloc "Power to the People" but also with Anpilov's movement "Working Russia," which, as we know, reserves the right to use unconstitutional means of fighting for power. "The form and methods of fighting for power are different for the Communist Party and Anpilov, but we are united on fundamental issues — the need to strengthen the state and to restore power to the workers," Valentin Kuptsov stated.

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Filatov: Moscow To Draft Over 20 Bills on Self-Rule

LD2812202795 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2022 GMT 28 Dec 95

[By Andrey Surzhanskiy]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 28 (Itar-Tass) — The Russian government is to draft over 20 bills in 1996 to implement the federal law on local self-rule, presidential administration head Sergey Filatov said in an interview with Itar-Tass.

He said the government passed a resolution to this effect at its today's meeting.

Filatov cited as most important the bills on social standards, organisation of local self-rule, financing and mortgage.

He said speedy adoption of these laws is essential as presidential decrees alone cannot provide solutions.

How quickly the bills are signed into law will largely depend on the newly elected State Duma, Filatov said, adding that "certain difficulties may arise" with the now massive presence ofcommunists in the Duma.

Sovietisation of local self-rule remains a threat, Filatov continued.

"It is no incident that the communists first of all want to lay hands on the local self-rule committee in the new Duma," Filatov said.

It was agreed at the government meeting today that discoordinated relations between federal and local authorities heavily account for the faltering progress of Russia's reforms.

Some of Russia's component republics are in no haste to put into practice important federal laws and some simply ignore them.

Well-tuned local self-rule is therefore becoming crucial now, Filatov said.

If the government fails to establish close dialogue with regional authorities, "we may end up with a confederation instead of the (Russian) federation," he warned.

Military Issues

Missile Troops To Be Protected From ESP Influences

LD2812172695 Moscow NTV in Russian 1900 GMT 27 Dec 95

[Video report by unidentified correspondent; passages within quotation marks are recorded; from the "Segodnya" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Correspondent] We were the first television crew that was allowed to film in the Stavropol military engineering missile forces communications' college. [passage omitted] There are 12 communications' colleges in the Armed Forces of Russia. But only Stavropol is training today third millennium military professionals.

[Oleg Popov, head of college, identified by caption] "We train specialists in space communications, in systems that are used only in our branch of forces."

[Correspondent] There are over 100 training posts in the college's communications' study system. This is one of them — an exact model of a combat missile system at a depth of almost 50 meters. [passage omitted] Finally, the college's holiest of holies, a class where students try to communicate with space objects.

[Gennadiy Limin, head of department, identified by caption] "There are space stations that make it possible for students to resolve tasks on space communication channels.

[Correspondent] "Let us say, signals from non-Earth civilians?

[Limin] "We are working on some questions on this in the college, but all of that is still being worked on, still being studied. The likelihood of such events are not equal to null."

[Correspondent] It is probably no accident that it was within the walls of the college that a device was invented that is capable of giving a completely new reading in science.

[Valeriy Titov, candidate of technical sciences, identified by caption] "Unfortunately, there have not yet been any devices capable of registering rapid biorhythms. We have made such a device. It turned out that people, radiation, ecology, television, and radio — that is obvious, have an effect upon rapid biorhythms.

[Vladimir Krivokon, director of scientific study center of computer technology and information science, identified by caption] "The device registers the state a person is in, registers when he enters a state of altered consciousness.

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For instance, technical means may be used to influence an officer sitting at a launch control panel, for instance, biofield influence. If such technology is developed, he may be directed to launch a missile without official sanction, through his consciousness, of course."

[Correspondent] The device notes not only the degree of influence on consciousness, but also on a person's organs — heart, liver, joints, blood. It can even calculate if those who have been in radioactive zones will have healthy children. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Those who really have the ability to bring parapsychological influence to bear on a person do not always use their gift for good.

[Vladimir Toiskiy, candidate of technical sciences, identified by caption] "There are more and more people who have certain extrasensory abilities. What may that lead to? That may lead to inequality. That is, those who have that ability may put others down. That is to say, it is a question here of ethics and morals."

[Correspondent] Today, scientists of the Stavropol college are working to make their device capable not only of diagnosing the biorhythms of a person, but also to turn it into a kind of defense shield. This is especially important for those who are sitting at a missile launch control panel. [video shows interior of college, devices]

Nuclear & Space Issues

Nuclear Smuggling Ring Apprehended in Novosibirsk

LD2812204395 Moscow Russian Public Television First Channel Network in Russian 1800 GMT 28 Dec 95

[From the "Novosti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] The smuggling of radioactive materials is characteristic of the end of the 20th century. The mafia dealing in this is probably no less dangerous than narcomafia. The Federal Security Service [FSB] has today arrested a criminal ring dealing in radioactive materials. [video shows metal granules, urban scenes, arrests]

These are granules of enriched uranium-235. It is not recommended to hold them for a long time — their radioactivity is 2,000 times higher than the normal radiation background. This cargo — dangerous and no doubt profitable for someone — has been delivered to Novosibirsk by middlemen from a former Soviet republic, probably from Kazakhstan. The criminals tried to sell it to other middlemen for transporting abroad. Ten kilos cost $800,000. The ring was tracked down by the regional directorate of the FSB. Together with the regional directorate on organized crime they should take credit for arresting the criminals in the act. The security authorities believe they have closed an important channel for transporting uranium to South Korea, presumably. A total of nine people were arrested. An investigation is under way. It still remains to be seen whether the criminals will be jailed.

[Begin P. Kozyrev recording, department head of the Western Siberia district directorate on organized crime — identified by caption] The court has a complicated structure, and it often happens that courts deliver quite different verdicts on our cases — measures that do not provide for confinement, let us put it this way. [end recording]

It is worth noting that dangerous cargoes come to Russia from the former Soviet republics. The FSB claims there is more order in Russia.

[Begin A. Mironov recording, head of the regional directorate of FSB — identified by caption] The problem of safe-keeping of radioactive materials is under strictest controls. [end recording]

Federal Assembly

Duma Delegates To Press for Victory in Chechnya

MK2912090295 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 28 Dec 95 p 2

[Report by Pavel Felgengauer: "The War in Chechnya Will Continue. The 17 December Elections Were Won by Advocates of Options Based on the Use of Force"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In December 1995, the first anniversary of the war, general attention was focused on the elections in Russia and, separately, on the elections in Chechnya, as well as on attempts by Dudayev's armed supporters to prevent the election of Doku Zavgayev as head of the republic. The war in Chechnya, just like Russia's foreign policy, was not a particularly important subject in preelection discussions. Residents of Russia were clearly more concerned with economic matters — inflation, privatization, wage arrears, and so forth, therefore, the actual positions of both individual winning factions and the Duma as a whole are becoming clear only now.

Last Sunday, on the "Itogi" TV program, one of the leaders of the Communists — the largest faction in the new Duma — Gennadiy Seleznev (deputy speaker of the old Duma and a possible new speaker), spoke quite clearly and definitively in favor of revolving the Chechen problem by force. The army in Chechnya must be beefed up, Doku Zavgayev supported, and Dzhokhar Dudayev and Shamil Basayev caught or eliminated in

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some other way ("to pull out two bad teeth"). Evidently a similar position will be upheld by virtually all of the other main factions in the Duma, except for "Yabloko" and some independent deputies. It is indicative that on 17 December none of the "patriotic" associations that at the same time opposed the war in Chechnya got into the Duma.

As far as can be judged, the aspiration of the Defense Ministry, the Internal Affairs Ministry, and other relevant agencies to "liquidate the bandits and establish the legal authority of Doku Zavgayev" will get substantially greater support in the new Duma than in the former one. Conditions have clearly emerged in the ruling Russian elite for a sufficiently broad consensus on the Chechen issue.

At the same time, in a purely military sense, the positions of federal troops in Chechnya today look considerably stronger and more favorable than a year ago. During the six months of the "neither peace nor war" situation, the Chechens have failed to consolidate their positions at any of the strategically important points in lowland Chechnya. The eventually unsuccessful attempt by the Chechen separatists to seize Gudermes this month showed that even after a half-year rest their detachments are incapable of long resisting federal troops in open combat, even if they have the initiative in choosing the place and time for combat engagements. Attacks on towns and villages can only win a war if the opposing side has no political will to continue the bloodshed, and so far there are no such signs in present-day Russia. It seems that before spring the main forces of the Chechen separatists will have to stay in the mountains, where their movements will be limited by deep snow.

Federal troops today firmly control the main communication nodes in lowland Chechnya and at the same time continue to hold some strongpoints in the mountains, near Vedeno and Shatoy. This creates good prerequisites for delivering powerful strikes against the enemy when the situation is fit.

However, to all appearances, large-scale "mopping-up" operations will be postponed until spring, when favorable weather conditions set in for effective air support. Furthermore, fighting in Gudermes showed that the Internal Affairs Ministry has neither the forces nor the appropriate combat organization for a decisive strike that will pull out the "two bad teeth" in accordance with the demands of the Duma majority (preferably before the presidential elections). It seems that crack commando, marine, and ground force units, which have the experience of combat action in the region, will again need to be moved to the Caucasus. At any rate, one official leader of the second largest faction in the new Duma — the NDR ["Russia Is Our Home"] — General Lev Rokhlin, has publicly told the officers of his 8th Guards Corps that they should be ready for another stint in the Caucasus.

Long-term planning of operations naturally does not rule out that in winter Russian troops will not only follow a generally defensive strategy, but will also deliver occasional strikes against the enemy, seeking to catch it off-guard and inflict maximum painful losses, especially during spells of flying weather. Chechen detachments in the mountains, let alone civilians, are in for a hard winter and a still more unpleasant spring.

Shakhray To Help Create Duma Centrist Faction

LD2812181495 Moscow Radiostantsiya Ekho Moskvy in Russian 1300 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Sergey Shakhray, who yesterday resigned from the post of deputy prime minister, intends to take part in the creation of a centrist faction in his future work in the State Duma. He believes that the democratic process in the new parliament is even more real than in the previous one.

[Begin Shakhray recording] In order for the votes of the regions to be heard: These 77 deputies who have made it through to the single-seat constituencies as independents plus some 20 deputies for single-seat constituencies from parties that failed to overcome the five percent barrier. There is a possibility of creating a nonpolitical, nonideologized group numbering some 50-60 deputies that will influence the legislative process, the structure of the State Duma and the government's activities, and I believe that its main priorities will be the interests of the voters of the regions and self-government.

I hope that in the State Duma the voice of the professionals will be heard even though the presidential elections will seriously hamper this. In this context, with the professionals from the factions of the communists, Russia is Our Home, Yabloko — my five-year long experience shows this — a common language can be found. [end recording]

Newly-Elected Deputies To Join Yushenkov Group

LD2812172195 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1355 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — As many as 17 deputies winning seats in single mandate constituencies have agreed to join a parliamentary group formed by former head of the previous Duma's defense committee Sergey Yushenkov of Russia's Choice party, who was re-elected to the new parliament.

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Yushenkov told Interfax on Thursday the group includes leading human rights activist Sergey Kovalev, Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, leader of the Democratic Russia movement Galina Starovoytova and head of the Strategy Foundation Gennadiy Burbulis.

Under house rules, 35 members are needed to form a parliamentary group.

Yushenkov said the deputies at a private meeting proposed their group be called Accord or, most probably, Interregional Deputies' Group.

He said the group would have no leaders, but coordinators whose functions were written down in interim regulations they adopted. These are expected to represent the group at Duma Council sessions and brief both the Duma Speaker and Duma Council on decisions taken by the group. "In fact, these are purely technical functions," Yushenkov said.

He said the group had agreed to focus on coordination of law making activity as a broader basis for unification rather than develop a "political face."

Shokhin Proclaims Plans To Remain Duma Deputy

LD2812175295 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1541 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — Aleksandr Shokhin, re-elected to the new State Duma, refuted media reports that he could replace Sergey Belyayev as chairman of the State Property Committee. Belyayev will now lead the Our Home Is Russia (NDR) faction in the State Duma.

"I plan to remain a deputy of the State Duma," Shokhin told Interfax after attending a government meeting Thursday.

Shokhin made it clear that he would like to chair the Duma committee for economics.

Speaking on possible candidates to replace Belyayev, Shokhin suggested that a "stranger" will be appointed to head the State Property Committee. The present first deputy chairmen, Alfred Kokh and Petr Mostovoy, "have virtually no chance of heading the body," he said. Mostovoy simultaneously heads the Federal Insolvency (Bankruptcy) Department.

Yeltsin Advocates Ex-Deputies Acting as 'Consultants'

LD2812174595 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1610 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin agrees that many former State Duma deputies not elected to the new Duma should be employed either in the parliament as experts or consultants, or in other state structures, Duma Speaker Ivan Rybkin told Interfax Thursday [28 December].

During their meeting Thursday, Yeltsin backed Rybkin's position of "not throwing away the potential of the previous Duma."

Parliamentary factions and the State Duma office, but not as in 1993 the presidential administration, must prepare the first plenary session of the new Duma, Yeltsin and Rybkin believe.

The first session is likely to be held on January 16, Rybkin said. The president, who in line with the Constitution can convene the State Duma earlier than 30 days after the elections, "is not in a hurry" to convene the first session.

Rybkin told Yeltsin that he would form a conciliatory commission made up of representatives of four election blocs which won at the elections, as soon as the Central Electoral Commission publishes the official results of the December 17 elections. The commission will develop temporary regulations of the State Duma and its new structures.

In reference to the rumors that if he is not elected speaker for a second term he may transfer to work in executive power bodies, Rybkin said that he "intends to work in the State Duma as an ordinary deputy, not relying on heading any committee or deputy group." Rybkin added "it's not important who will head the new Duma, but it is important that it works."

Duma Factions To Prepare For 16 Jan Meeting

LD2812171495 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1616 GMT 28 Dec 95

[Report by Pavel Kuznetsov]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 28 (Itar-Tass) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin is likely to convene the new State Duma, or the lower house of the parliament, for its first meeting on January 16, Duma chairman Ivan Rybkin told reporters today emerging from a meeting with Yeltsin.

He said their talk related to preparation for the sitting of the new-convocation Duma.

It was agreed, Rybkin said, that the setting would be prepared by leaders of Duma factions, not by the presidential administration.

Rybkin said he informed the President that he had drafted a resolution which is to set up a Duma provisional commission on rules of procedure and a provi-

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sional secretariat to attend to logistics of the 1996 Duma sitting.

The two bodies, to be formed of delegates of new factions, will start work as soon as the official election results are out, Rybkin said.

An arbitration commission will also be set up by factions to discuss, "in consultations," the structure of the new Duma and changes to Duma committees.

Rybkin said Yeltsin and he discussed the housing for newly elected parliamentarians, to be taken over from outgoing ones.

He added that he proposed to Yeltsin that the Duma-quitting parliamentarians be offered jobs as advisers and deputies' aides in the "Duma system".

"This potential (outgoing parliamentarians) should not be ignored, and the President backed my view on this question," Rybkin said.

As for his own prospects, Rybkin said he wants to work in the Duma even if he is not re-elected as speaker.

He said his six years in the parliament made the floor "habitual" for him. Rybkin stressed that he would not seek chairmanship of any Duma committee or faction.

MP Claims Dual Posts for Kozyrev Contradict Constitution

LD2812194995 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1812 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — The suggestion recently made by Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev that he may be a State Duma deputy while retaining his ministerial post contradicts the Russian Constitution and the law on the status of Duma deputies, leader of the Communist Party faction in the State Duma Viktor Ilyukhin told Interfax Thursday.

Ilyukhin threatened to raise the issue of depriving Kozyrev of his parliamentary seat if he comes to the first Duma session on January 16 as the foreign minister.

The simultaneous occupation of posts of a parliament member and a minister contradicts the constitutional principle of separation of powers, Ilyukhin said, recalling that during the registration as a candidate for the Duma, Kozyrev was to sign a statement saying that if he were elected parliament member, he would quit his post.

Rybkin Orders Welfare Provision for Outgoing Deputies

LD2812210195 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1940 GMT 28 Dec 95

[Report by ITAR-TASS correspondent Igor Zhukov]

[FBIS Translated Text] Moscow, 28 Dec — The State Duma administrative office today issued an order from Speaker Ivan Rybkin on social welfare provision for deputies in the outgoing Duma who are surrendering their parliamentary powers. According to the order, deputies who were not re-elected to the Duma will receive a lump sum of three months' salary on top of their severance pay.

This will cost more than 1 billion rubles. Rybkin's order does not say where this impressive sum will come from.

Regional Affairs

Strong Explosion in Groznyy Leaves Several Wounded

LD2912101195 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0944 GMT 29 Dec 95

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Nikolay Zagnoyko]

[FBIS Translated Text] Groznyy, 29 Dec (ITAR-TASS) — A strong explosive device detonated today in one of the districts of the Chechen capital on Pervomayskaya street, according to initial reports several people have been wounded, verified by an ITAR-TASS correspondent at the scene of the incident.

As a result of the explosion a large crater was formed and several automobiles were destroyed. According to witnesses, with whom the ITAR-TASS correspondent spoke, simultaneously with the explosion unidentified persons fired at a military petrol tanker passing by. There are wounded among the servicemen.

The area of the incident has been cordond off and ambulances are arriving here.

Federal Units Deny Shelling Achkhoy-Martan Village

LD2812185295 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1812 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, Dec 28 (Interfax) — Russian Federal units did not shell the village of Achkhoy-Martan, an officer in the federal command press center told Interfax. He denied reports that this western Chechen village came under fire from multiple rocket launchers.

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According to the command, it is Chechen separatists led by Dzhokhar Dudayev that fired grenade launchers at the village from the neighboring Stary Achkhoy, probably as an act of revenge against the population for making the separatists leave the village.

Dudayev Gunmen Ready To Depart Achkhoy-Martan

LD2912112395 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1116 GMT 29 Dec 95

[By Sharip Asuyev and Nikolay Zagnoiko]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] GROZNYY, December 29 (Itar-Tass) — Members of the Dudayev armed groups, which entered the village of Achkhoy-Martan on the eve of the elections and captured a number of administrative buildings there, have announced that they are ready to leave the village, if a safe corridor is provided for them, Movladi Gadayev, officer on duty at the Achkhoy-Martan Interior Ministry department, told Tass today. Shamil Burayev, prefect of the Achkhoy-Martan District, and Kyuri Ozdamirov, local police chief, acted as intermediaries between the command of the federal troops and the gunmen, in order to settle the problem without violence. According to Movladi Gadayev, now it is being decided whether or not the gunmen will be allowed to leave Achkhoy-Martan and go south towards the mountains.

The situation in the area continues to be tense. Shelling is heard in the village almost all the time. A shell hit an house on Wednesday, killing two children. Their father was brought to hospital in a grave condition.

Paper Details Chechen Leader's Moscow News Conference

MM2812155295 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 27 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Pavel Anokhin: "200,000 Refugees Have Returned to Chechnya"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Doku Zavgayev, head of the Chechen Republic, gave a news conference at the Ministry for Nationalities Affairs and Regional Policy in Moscow yesterday.

He was late arriving for it because of an overrunning meeting with Russian Government Chairman Viktor Chernomyrdin. But the head of the Chechen Republic did not expatiate on its results, confining himself to a report that the budget was discussed.

Doku Zavgayev began his news conference with information on the election results in Chechnya, in which 68 percent of the republic's population participated. Precisely 95 percent of the voters voted for the present head of the republic. Ibragim Suleymenov, the republic's military commissar, and Vladimir Zorin — on the party list — became State Duma deputies from Chechnya. D. Zavgayev viewed the election results as a sign that Chechen society is moving toward civil accord. In his opinion, the fact that refugees have started to return to the republic can serve as confirmation of this — 200,000 have already returned out of 400,000.

The head of the republic reminded people that the state gives all possible assistance to the victims of war. A Russian presidential edict approved the concept of reviving the republic and confirmed a special program providing for full compensation to be paid to everyone who has suffered a loss of material property, as well as for the rebuilding of housing and the creation of the necessary number of jobs. The adopted decisions are to be implemented in 1996.

In addition, a Russian Federation presidential edict has been adopted on legal guarantees for members of illegal armed formations, which exempts from liability those "who do not have blood on their hands." A commission is already working, and yesterday it examined the first 100 statements.

The problem of the normative legal base governing his powers as head of the republic was touched on at the news conference. He reported that a session of the Chechen Republic Supreme Council decided to rely on the existing laws of the USSR, the RSFSR, the Russian Federation, and the Chechen Republic on the republic's territory pending the adoption of a new constitution. Doku Zavgayev also familiarized journalists with the functional powers of the head of the republic. He informed them that he was elected for two years, and his power is under the control of the Supreme Council of Chechnya.

Of course, the events in Gudermes were also touched on at the news conference. According to Zavgayev, dozens of both civilians and servicemen died in the city, and a commission is working.

Responding to a request from ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI's correspondent to comment on a statement by certain politicians and mass media to the effect that the "Afghanization of the conflict" is taking place in Chechnya, Doku Zavgayev emphasized: "The Afghan variant is impossible in Chechnya. We have our own traditions and our own way of life. Unfortunately, however, there are forces which are trying to blow the situation apart and striving for so-called Afghanization. Thus, there is even a citizen of Latvia among the people detained while trying to commit acts of terrorism. There are

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also nearer neighbors, foreigners. Unfortunately, they are also mixed up in the Gudermes events."

Doku Zavgayev reported that the desire to impart an internal Chechen nature to the dialogue is already having positive results. For example, a standoff between gunmen and civilians lasted seven days in Urus-Martan. But a compromise was reached precisely thanks to the internal Chechen dialogue, in which representatives of the clergy, young people, and women have been mobilized. The gunmen left the population center of 40,000 people. There was a similar outcome in Achkhoy-Martan.

Economic Issues

Introduction of New U.S. $100 Bill Causing 'Panic'

LD2812132595 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1100 GMT 28 Dec 95

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Video shows news conference] The Central Bank and eight commercial banks have today announced their intention to protect the interests of Russian citizens, following a panic among people over the introduction of a new $100 bill.

[Begin unidentified official recording] Eighty percent of all the U.S. currency in the hands of the population are in $100 bills. [end recording]

All the statements by the U.S. Federal Reserve fund about the one-to-one exchange must be forgotten, because we are not in the United States. An exchange of every $100 bill will cost you $2 in bank commission. Thus, considering that Russians hold in cash $10 billion or more, the banks will collect $200 million in commission. However, it is too late or perhaps too early to be afraid. The introduction of the new $100 bill is not planned for January. As Americans have promised, the old notes remain a legal means of payment indefinitely. But in Russia, as everyone knows well, the circulation of the old notes is officially restricted.

The bankers believe there is a way out: Open a foreign currency account and your losses during the exchange will fall to 1 percent.

[Begin unidentified official recording] Any transaction involving an exchange of currency will have costs. And someone will have to pay for these costs. Only mouse traps are fed with free cheese. [end recording]

Central Bank Promises Smooth Exchange

LD2812171295 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1541 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (FIA) — The Central Bank and leading commercial banks will help lower the fuss during the exchange of 100-dollar banknotes in 1996, First Deputy Central Bank Chairman Aleksandr Khandruyev told a news conference in Moscow on Thursday.

The Central Bank will propose that the State Customs Committee reduce or cancel the customs duties for registering the hard currency taken through the border, and "help organize credit support for commercial banks seeking an uninterrupted flow to the Russian market of new 100-dollar banknotes," he said.

Khandruyev also said that some leading commercial banks, including Sverbank, Tokobank, Rossiiskiy Credit, Mosbusinessbank, and Inkombank have pledged not to exceed the 2-percent commission for juridical persons and individuals, and 1.5 percent for banks.

During the sale of cash dollars or giving from deposits cash including newly-emitted dollars, banks pledged not to exceed the maximum of 1 percent for non-cash dollars for juridical and physical persons, 0.8 percent for banks, while during purchase these indices will be not higher than 2 percent and 0.8 percent correspondingly, said Khandruyev.

Daily Analyzes Dollar Rise Against Ruble

MM2912114395 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 26 Dec 95 p 14

[Report from "Departmental Supplement" section "based on RIA and 'ROSBIZNESKONSALTING' materials:" "Dollar Rising, but Stably"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the period 13 through 19 December the dollar exchange rate at the Moscow Interbank Currency Exchange auctions rose by 20 rubles [R] or 0.43 percent.

The dollar's rise on the currency market has acquired the nature of a protracted tendency. And although real purchases of currency by clients stand behind this few people expected the rise in the demand for dollars to come at the end of the year. The banks are continuing to buy dollars despite the extension of the currency band through 20 June 1996. To some degree this is connected with the banks' expectations: They reckon that the Central Bank will try by early January to move the exchange rate away from the lower boundary of the zone at least by R100 in order to have freedom of action in the following month. The Central Bank should thus not impede the rise of the exchange rate but in counting on this many commercial banks in the second half of the day are beginning to buy dollars at "tomorrow's" rate in order to sell them the next day at "today's" rate which recently has been rising constantly as a result of the rise in the Moscow Interbank Currency

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Exchange rate. At the same time we can see funds being transferred from the state securities market to the currency market as a result of which prices for short-term state bonds are experiencing strong fluctuations while the dollar exchange rate is rising stably. As we know many commercial banks and their big clients since the start of the summer had begun actively to "leave" currency for short-term state bonds but now that process is being reversed — the banks are seeking by the end of the year to return to currency in order to register a currency profit from this operation.

One more important factor in the rise in demand for currency is the cheap ruble funds. Since early October on only three days have rates for one-day interbank credits been above 30 percent.

The rise in demand for currency at the end of the year is a new feature for the Russian currency market. For several years the end of the year has generated a deficit in rubles and the sale of dollars. Thus, in 1992 the dollar exchange rate in December declined 7.3 percent after a very rapid rise in previous months. In 1993 December was again characterized by a decline in the rate at which the exchange rate rose — to 1.3 percent. In December 1994 the dollar exchange rate rose relatively strongly — by 9.8 percent — but that rapid rate was largely artificially provoked by the Central Bank, which at that period was pursuing a policy of bringing the rates of devaluation of the ruble close to the inflation rates. In the second half of December the Central Bank regularly went onto the interbank market as a buyer of currency.

The increase in the exchange rate at the first auctions after the 13 December holiday continued and it rose immediately by 10 points, which few people expected. The Central Bank covered virtually the entire discrepancy between demand and supply. Trade turnover increased somewhat compared with the previous day.

Specialists believe that such a substantial rise in the exchange rate was largely determined by the Central Bank's actions. To all appearances the trend toward the rise in the dollar exchange rate is part of the Central Bank's plans particularly before the New Year holidays which are usually accompanied by numerous payments.

The situation on the exchange 14 December confirmed the forecasts. The trend toward the rise in the exchange rate continued.

Nonetheless on 19 December the rise in the rate was R7 while all auction indicators almost trebled.

Central Bank: 'Currency Band' Could Be Lifted Mid 1996

MK2912100495 Moscow SEGODNYA in Russian 28 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Andrey Grigoryev: "Sergey Aleksashenko Will Be Responsible for Monetary Policy. Currency Band Could Become Obsolete by Mid-1996"]

[FBIS Translated Text] "The 'currency band' as an instrument of the Central Bank's policy could become obsolete by the middle of next year, and the exchange rate will be controlled using more normal methods" — this opinion was expressed yesterday by Sergey Aleksashenko at his first meeting with the press since his appointment as first deputy chairman of the Central Bank. Judging by the comments that followed, Mr. Aleksashenko believes that it would be useful to take into greater consideration the parity of the national currency's purchasing power.

It was not by chance that the new deputy chairman of the Central Bank paid a rather great deal of attention to currency policy. He will be in charge of the department for foreign operations and, in addition, of the unified economic department, accounting, and problems of the federal budget and extrabudgetary funds.

Thus, the sphere of Sergey Aleksashenko's competence includes the macroeconomic (or, in his words, "monetary") policy of the Central Bank and its interaction with other state fiscal agencies. Mr. Aleksashenko above all hopes to establish operative collaboration with his former colleagues in the Finance Ministry. He acknowledged that, until now, the Finance Ministry and the Central Bank have very often almost come to learn of one another's decisions from the newspapers, which cannot be regarded as normal. Practical moves of the new deputy chairman planned for the near future, among others, include the coordination of parameters of the monetary program for 1996 and the beginning of consultations with the International Monetary Fund, whose mission is going to arrive in Moscow as early as mid-January. In addition, Sergey Dubinin entrusted him with oversight by the Central Bank of how current commitments to the International Monetary Fund are being fulfilled.

Mr. Aleksashenko's "macroeconomic" competence will also involve the banking system. In his words, one of the major tasks for the coming months will be a reorganization of the system of retrieval and analysis of information on banks and their oversight. The present system is ineffective and too costly. Therefore, the Central Bank, in fact, is unable to carry out operative monitoring of the situation in a specific bank and, as a result, to pre-

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vent critical developments both in individual banks and the banking system as a whole. This notwithstanding, the Central Bank intends to introduce one of the most radical methodological changes — upgrading the card chart of accounts [plan schetov] — no earlier than in 1998. In the course of the next year the new chart will be finalized, and then it will take about a year to implement it.

Sergey Aleksashenko expressed his extremely negative attitude to two problems that are being actively discussed by bankers — the establishment of any privileges regarding the formation of the obligatory reserve fund and the attraction of domestic banks to placing the Central Bank's foreign currency reserves. "Any privileges with respect to the obligatory reserve fund are nothing but a de facto reduction in the rates of allocation, and this question can be discussed only from this angle." As for the latter, "this is not a problem for the near future." At the same time, Mr. Aleksashenko emphasized that he had expressed his personal view — "I am not ready to talk about the Russian [Central] Bank's policy."

Government Plans To Cut Taxes 'By Three Times' in 96

LD2812180095 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1541 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, Dec 28 (Interfax) — First Deputy Russian Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets said Thursday that the government plans to cut taxes by three times in 1996.

Meeting with German Ambassador to Russia Ernst-Yorg von Studniz [name as received], Soskovets expressed confidence that the measure would contribute to production growth and attracting foreign investments.

During the meeting the sides agreed that Russia and Germany will step up drafting a new agreement on avoiding double taxation. It was also decided that a delegation of heads of German firms will visit Moscow in early January to study possibilities of investing into the Russian economy. According to Soskovets, to date German private investments in Russia have totaled a modest of $240 million, mainly in the iron and steel industry and machine building.

Soskovets described the after-election political situation in Russia as "stable."

"We will reach agreement with all the parties. There will be no return to the past," he said.

He believes that 1996 will be a "year of stability" for Russia.

Finance Minister Vladimir Panskov Interviewed

LD2712143095

[FBIS Editorial Report] Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian at 1905 GMT on 25 December, on its "Moment of Truth" program, carries a 47-minute interview with Russian Finance Minister Vladimir Panskov by program moderator Andrey Karaulov. The two men are shown seated at a desk opposite one another. A screen caption indicates that the interview was recorded in Moscow on 16 December. The interview begins with a query about Russia's financial reserves:

"[Karaulov] How much money do we have in the coffers, Vladimir Georgiyevich?

"[Panskov] This is a very loose concept. If you take the budget as a whole, the federal budget amounts to around 200 trillion rubles. If you take the amount of money we have in the Finance Ministry's account today, this differs every day, but it can be 3 billion rubles, it can be 70 billion rubles, it can be 100 billion rubles."

After some debate about the continued existence of hard currency reserves in Russia, Panskov says:

"[Panskov] I cannot give you an exact figure now, but it amounts to around $10 billion.

"[Karaulov] So we only have $10 billion in hard currency?

"[Panskov] It is not a matter of only $10 billion. We have over 10 billion altogether. That is quite a lot."

Panskov is asked about income from privatization and replies that the aim of privatization was to create owners, not to fill state coffers. He adds that people should have understood that the reforms would involve some sacrifice. The two men then speak of poverty and the reforms implemented by the government:

"[Karaulov] How many people in our country are living below the poverty line today, Vladimir Georgiyevich?

"[Panskov] Probably around 30 percent.

"[Karaulov] Or perhaps a little more?

[Panskov] Yes, around 37 percent. But I am giving an approximate figure.

"[Karaulov] So, 37 percent of the people are below the poverty line. Are they victims of our reforms, in your view?

"[Panskov] Of course, definitely, and they are not the only ones — there are some among those above the poverty line as well.

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"[Karaulov] So why do we need these reforms? What do you think?

"[Panskov] Well, I did not carry out these reforms. I have been a member of the government for a year, and the government is carrying out certain reforms and is carrying them out in a certain way. It would be just as stupid to make a 180-degree turn today as it would be to return to feudalism, for example. Today, we need to enable the country to take its chosen path, with the fewest possible costs and losses for the people."

Panskov speaks of his wish to improve conditions for the people by doing his job well. He says that among other things, he is restricted by the amount of resources coming in and laws which determine how the money should be spent. He blames local authorities, who control their own budgets, for the nonpayments problems. The two men then speak about the war in Chechnya:

"[Karaulov] Vladimir Georgiyevich, you said in an interview that the war in Chechnya will not be an additional burden on us as citizens because whatever happens, expenditures to restore the economy in Chechnya have been set aside in the budget.

"[Panskov] I could not have said that and I did not say it because I simply do not have the right to lie. Not a single penny from the budget was set aside for the restoration of Chechnya and could not have been set aside, naturally. You know how all this began. You remember the assurances that it would end quickly, and so on; and no one expected the war to last for many months.

"[Karaulov] So, as everyone knows, we have fools even in the militia?

"[Panskov] Probably, but we are talking about me today. I cannot say today how much has been spent on the war in Chechnya, not because this is secret information, but because I simply do not have it, because the Finance Ministry has only financed the army.

"[Karaulov] That is staggering. Well, just approximately, Vladimir Georgiyevich, in dollars, if possible.

"[Panskov] I can't in dollars. It would probably be about 3 or 4 trillion rubles — around $1 billion probably."

Asked about fraud and money that is missing, Panskov speaks about the Finance Ministry's emphasis on audit and controls to ensure that its money is spent in the way intended. They speak about the problems of getting some of Russia's largest and most successful companies to pay tax and the problems of the taxation system as a whole. They argue about Russian money going abroad — Panskov says he thinks the amount of money being lost is not so great now, although he admits that the elections might have encouraged an additional outflow. The financial system as a whole is also now more stable, Panskov says. They discuss the functions of the Central Bank and relations between the Finance Ministry and the Central Bank. Panskov speaks about his attitude to work and the amount of work he is compelled to do, to the exclusion of his private life.

After the program ends, the following caption is shown on screen: "Dear colleagues, the use of fragments from the 'Moment of Truth' program outside the Commonwealth of Independent States is forbidden. The world rights to the broadcast belong to the "Moskovskiy Stil" [Moscow Style] producer center."

Chubays Warns of Bloodshed if Privatization Reversed

LD2812230095 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1725 GMT 28 Dec 95

[Interview with Anatoliy Chubays, first deputy prime minister, by correspondent Nikolay Svanidze; from the "Details" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Svanidze] Hello. After the government session today I had a meeting with First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoliy Chubays.

Anatoliy Borisovich, what plans as a whole does the government have for the coming year? Well, it is clear that... [pauses] we will not hide the fact from the viewers that presidential elections will be held in our country in June 1996. What are the government's plans in this connection?

[Chubays] We are now working on measures for 1996, although I am ready to say bluntly that the most important thing, of course, is that we are still working on the first half of 1996. Well, what in our opinion will happen during the first six months of 1996? We consider that there simply cannot be any revolutionary changes in the economy, either positive or negative, since there are no grounds for any such changes. At the same time, we are convinced that during the first half of 1996 we will have the possibility to take fairly serious steps in the social sphere and in the social area, which we previously have simply been unable to take given the actual state of finances.

[Svanidze] Such as?

[Chubays] Well, work is being carried out in several areas. I cannot yet tell you about the final outcome. One of the major areas, for instance, being worked upon at present is the well-known problem of the indexation of the population's savings. In my opinion we will be

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able to begin payments in the first half of 1996. The groundwork for this has already appeared, although, of course, the long-awaited program will have to begin with the least well-off, the elderly, invalids, and so on. A start may be made in the first six months of 1996. All of this, of course, will be possible only provided that — and this is the main task of our policy — provided that the main task of our policy is realized, namely, the reduction of the pace of inflation step by step and month by month. [passage omitted]

[Svanidze] Your former colleague, fellow-thinker and friend [Yegor] Gaydar is of the opinion, and has stated it on many occasions, that it is possible that virtually everything could be reversed. You have dedicated yourself to privatization, but people will come along who are dedicated to nationalization, and in line with their promises they will nationalize what you have privatized. Then the economy will punish all of us.

[Chubays] If you start cancelling privatization, it is not enough for you simply to take a piece of paper and write a law on it cancelling privatization signed by the speaker of the Duma or someone else. That is not enough. For this piece of paper to begin working in the way that the law on privatization, the state privatization program, the presidential edicts on privatization, and scores and hundreds of normative documents on privatization issued by the State Committee for the Management of State Property and the government began working, it is necessary for there to exist in society decisive social forces that are ready to put all this into effect. The opponents of privatization were unable to resist it. This is the whole point. There are bad proprietors and good proprietors, efficient and inefficient ones, but in present day Russia they comprise more than just a few individuals, a few hundred, a few thousand, or even hundreds of thousands of people.

[Svanidze] You are aware of the results of the elections?

[Chubays] Yes, I am aware of them. What, in your opinion, do they prove in this connection? Do you think that even those 22 percent who voted for the communists will tomorrow come along to take over property?

[Svanidze] The 22 percent are only those who voted for [Gennadiy] Zyuganov.

[Chubays] Let us add to them then those who voted for Power to the People and the other Communist Party and forget about all the others. Do you think that these people will tomorrow come along to take over property?

[Svanidze] Well, the radical part of them might come along and take over property.

[Chubays] What part of them in particular?

[Svanidze] [Viktor] Anpilov's supporters.

[Chubays] What then will be the response of the radical part of the other wing of the political spectrum? How will they take this?

[Svanidze] I think they will be displeased.

[Chubays] Precisely so. In other words, it is clear that it is at present impossible by simple legislative means to achieve the goals being proclaimed by Mr. Zyuganov sometimes heatedly and sometimes in a more intelligent way. It is impossible, to say nothing of the fact that it is very doubtful, whether these laws could even be adopted. Even if one imagines that such laws were adopted, it would be impossible to implement them and carry them out without bloodshed. In that case Mr. Zyuganov should say quite clearly that he wants Russian blood to be shed for the implementation of his ideas. We will see whether or not he has the courage to do so. [passage omitted]

Official: Communists 'Will Not Scare Off' Investors

LD2812133195 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1254 GMT 28 Dec 95

[By Oleg Velichko and Artem Protasenko]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] MOSCOW, December 28 (Itar-Tass) — A large Communist faction in the new State Duma (lower house) "will not scare off Western investors", Russian Deputy Economics Minister Yakov Urinson told Tass on Thursday.

"They (investors) understand pretty well that as soon as there is the president, the reform policy will not change," Urinson said.

"Real issues, not general ideology, concern potential investors at present," according to him.

However, "if a measure similar to the passing of the production- sharing bill is taken, Western investment may be forgotten," he said referring to a bill, passed by the State Duma on December 19 and intended to attract billions dollars of foreign cash into the country's oil industry.

The bill was highly assessed by Russian officials, whereas foreign investors said it was short of what was need for them to start investing.

"During the first six months of 1996, the rouble-exchange band will be preserved. Its highest and lowest limits will be directly dependent on the Cabinet's export and import policies." Most probably, the dollar exchange rate will be 100 to 200 roubles higher, he said.

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According to the current band, the exchange rate of one U.S. dollar is 4,300 to 4,900 roubles. The band will be extended to June 30, 1996 with a range of 4,550 to 5,150 roubles for one dollar.

The deputy minister did not share the concern of his colleagues about the banking crisis in the country. A normal process of creating banking groups is underway in Russia, he said.

"Russian and foreign banks actively start making not only portfolio, but also industry investment. The share of long-term loans rose from 4 percent in 1994 to 12 percent in 1995," according to the minister.

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National Affairs

Suprunyuk: Crimea Should Be in Kiev's Framework

LD2812212395 Kiev Radio Ukraine World Service in Ukrainian 2000 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Crimean Supreme Council Chairman Yevheniy Suprunyuk believes the main outcome of 1995 is consolidation within the autonomy's parliament and the fact that parliament has again become controllable. However, until now, the Supreme Council has been forced to tackle routine issues. He said it was necessary to upgrade the parliament's work towards solving long-term problems; first and foremost, to approve a program for leading the economy out of the crisis and to approve a new budget of Crimea.

Suprunyuk said he has not changed his stand since he became head of the autonomy's parliament.

Crimea should be within Ukraine's legal framework. It is time to solve the problem connected with the endorsement of the Crimean constitution. With the fundamental law being available, we shall be able to solve economic problems, and this will allow all of us to live better, Suprunyuk said.

Republicans Oppose Destruction of Missile Silos

LD2812180595 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1541 GMT 28 Dec 95

["INTERFAX-UKRAINE" news item]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KIEV, Dec 28 (Interfax - Ukraine) — The governing body of the Ukrainian Conservative-Republican Party opposes the destruction of a strategic missile silo, scheduled for early 1996.

A party statement which reached Interfax Thursday emphasizes that the destruction is designed to make Ukraine defenseless in the face of an offensive mounted by imperialism and neocolonialism with a view to transforming Ukraine into a colony.

The party strongly opposes the destruction of silos and believes they should be put to peaceful uses.

The destruction is scheduled to take place during the meeting of the Russian, U.S. and Ukrainian defense chiefs Pavel Grachev, William Perry and Valeriy Shmarov in the Ukrainian capital Kiev on January 4, 1996.

The party also opposes the holding of this meeting in Ukraine.

Ukraine is supposed to abolish 130 launching pads of SS-19 strategic missiles before the end of 1998. Five such pads are to be destroyed in 1996.

Activists Criticize Ministry's Trade Union Bill

WS2912110795 Kiev UKRINFORM in English 0832 GMT 29 Dec 95

[From the "Current Events" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] As UKRINFORM learned from the press center of the Federation of Ukrainian Trade Unions, the National Council for Social Partnership has held a meeting in Kiev to discuss the law "On Ukrainian Trade Unions" prepared by the Ukrainian Justice Ministry on orders from the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers. Representatives of trade unions say that the law infringes on the rights of trade unions, adding that it must not be submitted to the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada [Supreme Council] for consideration. On their part, government representatives requested for a ten-day period to hold consultations and study the proposals made by the trade unions. The meeting also discussed the draft Ukrainian law "On Amendments to the Ukrainian Law on Collective Agreements" which was prepared by the Ukrainian Labor Ministry. The National Council for Social Partnership called on government leaders to develop a set of measures aimed at gradually settling debts on wages and bringing the minimum wage in line with the Ukrainian law "On Remuneration of Labor."

Power Unit Problem 'Rectified;' Operations Resume

AU2812132995 Kiev DEMOKRATYCHNA UKRAYINA in Ukrainian 23 Dec 95 p 1

[Unattributed report: "The First Power Unit at the Khmelnytskyy AES Has Been Put in Operation Again"]

[FBIS Translated Text] As UKRINFORM was told by the public relations department of the State Committee for Atomic Energy, on 20 December 1995, at 0640, after the defect — related to local combustion of hydrogen, where it seeped from a crack in the turbine electric generator's cooling system piping — was rectified, power unit No. 1 of the Khmelnytskyy Atomic Electric Power Plant was re-connected to the power system. (The damage at the unit occurred on 19 December 1995 at 1455).

The voltage is being increased. At 0900 in the morning of 20 December, the unit worked at the capacity of 750 megawatts.

There have been no violations of limits or conditions of safe operation of the equipment.

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Odessa Electricity Cut Off for Two Hours Daily

WS2912110295 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0153 GMT 29 Dec 95

[By Stefan Korshak, "Special to INTELNEWS"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Odessa, Dec 27 — Odessa's electric power utility will implement a system of planned power cut-offs against the wishes of the Odessa City Council. The electrity shutoffs — already being implemented — leave Odessa citizens and businesses in the dark for two hours a day; typically once in the morning and once in the evening. The electric company is throwing the breakers as a result of an order from the Energy Ministry, which is attempting to force energy conservation in the face of fixed utilization tariffs and often-corrupt meter readers.

"We have a mandate to turn off the electricity of all users with the exception of the police, city and oblast government offices, and military installations, and we are going to exercise it," said Tymofiy Orishanskyy, assistant director of OdesOblEnergo. "The opinion expressed by the Odessa City Council has for us no great signifance. The energy situation is Ukraine permits us no alternative." Odessa City Council Assistant Chairman Ihor Fesenko disputed this, saying that while "no one argues here with the proposition that we have to live within certain established energy usage limits, the question is about the sharing of electricity between the oblast and the city." Fesenko accused OblOdesEnergo of "artificially lowering energy limits to the city" and said that this was a result of "a policy designed by the oblast leadership to throttle the city of Odessa." "Except for 1995, the city of Odessa has always received more power than the oblast," he said.

"There were good reasons for this — organizations which work around the clock are located within the city limits." Fesenko said the Odessa City Council has requested a re-evaluation of the present energy division policy within the oblast, and maintained that in spite of difficulties the city of Odessa has paid all its electricity bills.

Broadcasting Council on 5-Year TV Channel Plans

WS2912110095 Kiev INTELNEWS in English 0153 GMT 29 Dec 95

["Special to INTELNEWS" by Natalya Petyakh]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kiev, Dec 27 — For the next five years Ukraine will have three national and six regional television channels, according to a decision reached by the country's National Broadcasting Council. Council Chairman Viktor Petrenko, speaking at a conference held by the council, said that two of the national channels will be licensed to the government-owned UT-1 and UT-2 networks, while a third will be granted to either Information Service or Independent Ukrainian TV, two commercial firms which have submitted applications. The latter entity, despite its name, will not be wholly Ukrainian owned. According to Petrenko, 29 percent of the equity in Independent Ukrainian TV will be held by Public Russian Television (the former Ostankino), while other shareholders will include Ukraine's State Property Fund, the Fund of Business Cooperation and the Ukrainian branch of the Pushkin Fund. Applying for the right to use the regional channels are UTAR, TONIS, Center, Pivden (South), TVA (Chernihiv), ICTV and Nova Mova. Petrenko also announced that, to protest government restrictions imposed earlier this year against Russian Public Television, the council has refused to grant a license to Ukraine's National Television Company. The move is viewed as a largely symbolic gesture, since observers agree that the council lacks the power to force government television off the air. Deputy Council Chairman Mykola Slobodyan noted the widespread copyright violations incurred when non-state television networks broadcast pirated films.

According to Slobodyan, the council "recently received a letter from International Intellectual Property Association Chairman Eric Smith" charging the Ukrainians with violating the Bern Copyright Convention, which the country signed in October. During the first half the year Ukrainian TV companies, according to the letter, broadcast more than 80 films without having the right to do so. The letter, Slobodyan said, cited the violators as follows: TET, 33 films; TONIS, 26; UTAR, 15 and Gravis, 13.

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Belarus

Lukashenka Warns People Against 'Rebellion'

WS2912094795 Minsk BELAPAN in English 0832 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Speaking at the December 27 ceremony on the occasion of opening of a new trolleybus route, President Alyaksandr Lukashenka cautioned again the Belarusian people against "rebellion" and warned its would-be instigators that he would take the toughest measures not to allow destabilization of the situation in the country. "We have already learned by the painful experience of the August four-day strike in the Minsk Metro. Today some want to repeat this." Mr. Lukashenka said. The President holds that certain political forces which pretend to be defenders of the people's interests are trying today to act through trade unions. Alyaksandr Lukashenka expressed hope that the people would have "soberness" enough not to be led by these forces.

Lukashenka Seen Facing 'Dilemma' After Elections

WS2812151695 Minsk SVABODA in Belarusian 22 Dec 95 p 4

[Commentary by Vital Tsyhankow: "The Results of the Russian Elections as Another Problem for the Belarusian President. The Fiasco of Lebed and Skokov Becomes Serious Trouble for Lukashenka"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The results of the parliamentary elections in Russia are yet to be analyzed in the most scrupulous manner. We, however, are primarily interested in the possible influence of the Russian events on the situation in our country, as well as in certain not obvious lessons resulting from these elections.

As the saying goes, everything is learned by comparison. It is namely in comparison with Russia that we can assess the activeness of the Belarusian voters on 29 November and 10 December [parliamentary by-election in Belarus]. Nearly for a month all channels of the Russian television were filled with political advertisements, debates, and sociological prognoses. The elections became topic no. 1 on the pages of a majority of serious newspapers. Two days before the vote, the Russian president delivered a serious address to citizens.

Against this background, Belarus, in which Alyaksandr Lukashenka actually declared a boycott of the elections, provided an unpleasant and antidemocratic contrast. Even under these circumstances, however, approximately as many people (61 percent) participated in the first round of the elections in Belarus as in Russia. The wish of a large part of the Belarusian population to elect the legislative authority was evidently quite strong. One can thus presume that quite a serious breakthrough took place in the mood of our citizens — the "escape from Lukashenka." Although it is not yet a run toward democracy, it is unequivocally an escape "away from the president." While in May the people told Lukashenka "do whatever you want!", to put it figuratively, the sense of the recent statement was completely different: "Two authorities are better than one."

The direct result of the Russian elections for Belarus was the failure of the forces on which Lukashenka had bet. The communists's victory to a certain degree has already been analyzed; it was expected and predicted, and it is hard to say anything new here. However, the complete fiasco of the KRO (Congress of Russian Communities), which came as a surprise for Russian sociologists and political elites, is no less important for us. Even the Kremlin counted on the KRO as the lesser evil, which was supposed to take away Zhirinovskiy's electorate. Lebed, Skokov, and company, however, did not even reach the 5-percent threshold; the electorate of these forces do not accept half measures, and General Lebed being aligned with one party was not accepted by Russia.

Although rumors that Lukashenka's people held secret talks with the KRO leaders made rounds a long time ago, it was initially impossible to confirm them. Incidentally, Zhirinovskiy very anxiously reacted to these rumors by calling Lukashenka a "kolkhoz stableman" in one of his televised speeches. These suspicions were unexpectedly confirmed by [Lukashenka spokesman] Zamyatalin in one of his regular sociological "swindles." This refers to the report of unknown Russian media that unknown Russian sociologists determined that 35 percent of Russian citizens want to see Alyaksandr Lukashenka as their president. The response of "Zamyatalin's Russians" to the question "whom would you elect as the Russian president?" was as follows: Lebed — 6.5 percent, Zyuganov — 6.3 percent, Skokov — 6 percent, and Zhirinovskiy — 1.5 percent (revenge for the "stableman"). It is clear to everybody that these figures were false and conceived: Skokov is generally unknown to broad masses, which was confirmed during the elections, and Zhirinovskiy received many more votes than 1.5 percent.

Zamyatalin, however, for some reason was sure, and convinced the president that it was namely the Skokov-Lebed alliance, which, moreover, is spiritually close to Lukashenka, that had the best prospects in Russia. Lukashenka perhaps cannot see any prospects for Yeltsin's new presidency, because otherwise he would not have indulged himself in statements such as "they all will be damned" (about the Belovezhskaya forest "bisons") [people who signed the Belovezhskaya for-

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est agreement dissolving the USSR]. The failure of the KRO came as an unpleasant surprise to Lukashenka, who is currently facing the following dilemma: on whom to bet in Russia? Should he continue the clandestine talks with Lebed, who, by the way, became a deputy to the Russian Duma in a one-seat constituency, or should he bow before the "Our Home — Gazprom" [Chernomyrdin's "Russia Is Our Home"], or finally recall that he has been a communist throughout his entire life, and begin wooing the winners of the parliamentary elections?

Nationalists Raise Fears About Russian Elections

MM2912115295 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 29 Dec 95 p 3

[Report by Valeriy Kovalev: "Is the 'Red Noose' a Cause of Fear? Nationalists Have Learned Nothing From Belarusian Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The results of the Russian State Duma elections are being widely discussed in Belarus. Naturally, the republic's public is concerned primarily about the impact of the results on Russian-Belarusian relations. The majority of politicians, asked about this by the republic's mass media, assume that there will no significant changes in mutual relations between Russia and Belarus and that the clearly defined course of close integration between the two states will be continued. Republic of Belarus President Alyaksandr Lukashenka declared in reply to journalists' questions in this context: "No matter how political forces are deployed after the elections in Russia, it will still have excellent relations with Belarus, as before." More or less similar statements were also made by leaders of the republic's main political parties.

The voices of Belarusian national-radicals are in obvious discord against this background. There has been another outbreak of their chronic illness — Russophobia. Yuryy Khadyka, deputy chairman of the Belarus People's Front Soym (board), for example, appraised the State Duma election results as "dangerous for Belarus" since, he claims, the majority of seats there have been won by champions of "chauvinist imperial ideology." This being so, he believes that practical steps toward a forcible revival of the former empire can be expected in the very near future. Sergey Naumchyk, another of the front's leaders, is trying to scare Belarusian citizens: "There is a red thread running between Minsk and Moscow, and it could turn into a noose around the neck of Belarusian statehood."

In other words, the national-radicals have again mounted their favorite hobbyhorse and are intimidating ordinary people with the "threat from the East." It looks as if the Belarusian nationalists have not learned anything even from their crushing defeat at the recent elections to the republic's Supreme Soviet (let us remind readers that not a single Belarus People's Front candidate managed to get into the new parliament). And yet it was their anti-Russian rhetoric and their openly pro-Western orientation that largely predetermined this defeat.

Lukashenka Approves Three Draft Economic Programs

WS2912093795 Minsk Radio Minsk Network in Belarusian 0400 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A working session with the participation of President Alyaksandr Lukashenka was held in the residence at Zaslawye on the evening of 28 December. The president and the government members approved three draft documents: the Socioeconomic Development of the Republic for 1996 Program, the new budget, and the Guidelines for Monetary and Credit Policy. The draft documents will be submitted to the 13th sitting of the Supreme Soviet for approval.

Constitutional Court Rejects Six Presidential Decrees

LD2812185595 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1621 GMT 28 Dec 95

[By Anna Kovalyova, Nikolay Zherebtsov, Andrey Petrovskiy, and Boris Yunanov; from the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The constitutional court in a verdict on Thursday qualified Lukashenka's latest decree on government salaries as being unconstitutional, the sixth such decree rejected by the court so far.

Under the controversial decree, the president vested himself with powers to set or change the size of salaries to the chairmen of the high and constitutional courts, national bank, senior parliamentary officials and head of the central electoral commission.

Legal experts speaking at hearings indicated that the decree was in breach of constitutional provisions for delineation of authority and independence of each government branch. It also violates the law on parliament setting the speaker's salary at 95% of the president's.

Worse still, the decree issued on July 12 was made effective from July 1.

Among other decrees rejected by the court is one on the removal of fringe benefits to legislators on all level, cabinet ministers and the president himself.

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Head of the administration's legal department Aleksandr Maryskin said the measure follows the country's economic hardships and a budget deficit not allowing to finance benefits to 5.6 million people out of the country's population of 10.2 million.

The court has qualified this as an attempt by the head of state to try to assume "some functions of the supreme legislative, namely, to make, annul or suspend laws which is the parliament's prerogative.

Minister Briefs Moldova, Hungary, Bulgaria on NATO

LD2812130595 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 26 Dec 95 p 3

[Report by Valeriy Kovalev: "NATO Expansion. Belarus Unequivocally Opposed"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Belarusian Defense Minister Lieutenant General Leanid Maltsaw spent the past working week on a foreign tour. He visited Moldova, Hungary, and Bulgaria in turn.

At a briefing for journalists on his return from his tour, the head of the Belarusian military department expressed satisfaction with its outcome. In all three countries, he said, the desire and readiness for the development of cooperation with our republic in the military sphere were displayed. In particular, an agreement in principle was reached with Bulgaria and Hungary on reciprocal training of officer cadres and on organizing vacations for servicemen's families by means of the exchange of passes to military resorts. Agreements on military-technical cooperation were also signed.

In accordance with these agreements, collaboration will be organized in material and technical support for the Armed Forces, deliveries of spare parts, and repairs to arms and equipment.

The Belarusian minister briefed the leaders of the military departments of Moldova, Hungary, and Bulgaria on his republic's position on the expansion of the NATO bloc. He stressed that Belarus is opposed to that step, which could lead to the destabilization of the situation in Europe.

Ministry To Transfer Funds for Legislative Session

WS2912115795 Minsk BELAPAN in English 0832 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sources in the Supreme Soviet report that one of these days, prior to New Year's Day, the Ministry of Finance will transfer 1,200 million rubles on the account of the Supreme Soviet for the organization of the first parliamentary session. These funds will be used to manufacture MP badges and to purchase the necessary technical equipment. The three billion rubles which were to have been transferred on the account of the Supreme Soviet by December 25 will most likely be allocated no earlier than in January.

Moldova

Dniester Constitution Approved by 83 Percent of Voters

AU2812142795 Chisinau INFOTAG in English 1930 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tiraspol, December 27 (INFOTAG) — The Dniester parliamentary elections and the two referenda were attended by 62.4 percent of citizens eligible to vote. These are the final results of the political action, which were officially announced today by Pyotr Denisenko, chairman of the region's Central Electoral Commission [CEC].

According to him, the voter rolls contained 451,614 names, though the December 24 data indicated the figure was 499,499. The sizable difference has been explained by the CEC by "a migration of the population."

The new Dniester Constitution was approved by 82.7 percent of voters, and joining the CIS — by 89.7 percent.

The voters elected 19 of 32 deputies for the Chamber of Legislature, and all 35 deputies for the Chamber of Representatives. Thirteen electoral districts will have a repeated election. The Dniester Parliament appealed to president Igor Smirnov to appoint the repeated voting on January 5, and to declare it a no-work day.

Chisinau Rejects Transfer of Mission to 14th Army

AU2812202795 Bucharest Radio Romania Network in Romanian 1700 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Moldovan party in the Joint Control Commission for the peaceful settlement of the situation in Dniester issued a communique in which it assesses that the Russian proposal regarding the function transfer from the Russian peacekeeping forces deployed in the eastern part of the Republic of Moldova to the 14th Russian Army is unacceptable. In this context, the communique reminds that Article 4 of the Moldovan-Russian convention signed in July 1992 stipulates that the Russian Army units deployed in Moldova are to observe strict neutrality. The transfer of function would also be tantamount to the violation of the stipulations of the 1994 accord concluded by Moscow and Chisinau regarding the juridical status, the manner of operation, and the deadlines of the Russian military units temporarily deployed on the territory

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of the Republic of Moldova. The latter accord also stipulates the full withdrawal of the Russian troops from Moldova.

We would like to mention that, on 23 November 1995, Lieutenant General Aleksandr Sokolov, deputy commander of the land troops of the Russian Federation, proposed a function transfer to the Operative Group of Russian Troops, the successor of the 14th Army.

As was announced today in Chisinau, this issue will be examined on 19 January, during the Moscow meeting of Presidents Boris Yeltsin and Mircea Snegur, our correspondent in the Republic of Moldova, Valentin Tigau, reports.

Snegur Criticizes Deputies' Stand on Dniester

LD2812180395 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1707 GMT 28 Dec 95

[From the "Presidential Bulletin" feature]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Mircea Snegur has accused leaders of the self-declared Transdniestrian republic of attempting to block the negotiating process between Chisinau and Tiraspol.

In a statement on Thursday, the president charged whom he called "the separatist leadership" of Transdniestria with holding regional elections and a referendum on December 24 whose sole aim was "to get fresh arguments" in support of the region's independence."

He also gave a negative reaction to the position taken by the Moldovan parliament and its Speaker Petr Luchinskiy.

He said that in an interview on national and regional television on the eve of Transdniestrian elections, Luchinskiy had called on the residents of the country's eastern parts to support those who were in favor of reintegration instead of condemning the separatists' unconstitutional actions. Snegur believes the speaker's interview "made it clear" Chisinau was supportive of the regional poll which was in breach of the Moldovan constitution.

He also criticized the parliamentary majority of deciding to set up a commission of inquiry into the causes of the regional conflict breaking out in spring 1992.

Snegur is surprised that senior parliament officials have failed to consult himself before taking the decision.

He is opposed to setting up any commissions leading the creation of enemy images and fuelling tension on both sides of the Dniester river. Snegur thinks Tiraspol leaders will now toughen their position ahead of commission findings.

He said the parliamentary decision could be damaging to or even halt the negotiating process and undermine Chisinau's position.

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Kazakhstan

President Issues Decree on Presidential Powers

LD2812153795 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0656 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Almaty, 28 Dec (ITAR-TASS) — The decree by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev "On the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan," which has the force of constitutional law, was carried by the local press today. It defines the president's status, powers, the procedures for relieving him of his presidential post or for his resigning before the term of office expires, as well as the legal backing of presidential activities. The president is elected for the term of five years. The same person cannot be elected president more than twice in succession.

The decree says that the head of state has no right to be a deputy of a representative body or occupy any other paid posts or be engaged in entrepreneurial activities. He should suspend his involvement with any political party during his time in office.

The president can be relieved of his post by parliament before his term of office expires if he displays consistent inability to perform his duties because of illness. The issue of the president's resignation cannot be raised during a period when the president is examining the issue of dissolving parliament before the end of its term.

If the president is relieved of his post ahead of time or if he resigns or dies, the speaker of the Senate will take over temporarily. If the speaker is unable to assume presidential duties, the prime minister is next in line. In this instance, extraordinary presidential elections should be held within two months of the event.

The decree also defines the status and rights enjoyed by former presidents of the republic. In particular, they have the right to remain permanent members of the republic's Constitutional Council for life. Attempts to defame the former president's honor and dignity are liable to prosecution.

Nazarbayev, Israel's Peres Sign Accords

LD2712144195 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 1423 GMT 27 Dec 95

[By Anatoliy Kerzhentsev]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tel Aviv, December 27 (Itar-Tass) — Israeli leader Shim'on Peres and visiting Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev on Wednesday signed a "Declaration on Basic Principles of Relations" between the two countries.

The sides also signed other agreements in the field of agriculture, healthcare, and environment protection.

Addressing the Israeli parliament, Nazarbayev stressed that Kazakhstan is interested in the development of economic cooperation with Israel. He expressed confidence that the Middle East peace process would be useful for all the peoples in the region.

Kazakh Defence Minister Sagadat Nurmagambetov who accompanied the president had a substantial talk with the Israeli Deputy Defence Minister Uri Or on the questions of further development of military ties between the two countries. He also visited several defence enterprises.

Nazarbayev arrived in Israel on Tuesday [26 December] for a three-day official visit heading the delegation of 110 people.

Nazarbayev, 'Arafat Sign Cooperation Agreements

LD2912112795 Almaty Kazakh Radio First Program Network in Russian 0400 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The second day of the visit to Israel by President Nursultan Nazarbayev was full of important meetings and talks.

In the morning, at his residence, he received the head of the opposition Likud party, Binyamin Netanyahu. The conversation took place behind closed doors.

The leader of our republic also held talks with Prime Minister of Israel Shim'on Peres. During the talks, prospects of further developing bilateral and mutually beneficial economic cooperation were discussed. Later on, the talks continued with the participation of the members of the official delegation. As a results of the talks, Nursultan Nazarbayev and Shim'on Peres signed a declaration on principles of relations between Kazakhstan and Israel.

Foreign Ministers Qasymzhomart Toqayev and Ehud Baraq signed agreements on mutual protection of investments and on encouraging these along with cooperation in the fields of environment protection, health care, medical equipment, agriculture, and the processing industry.

Answering journalists questions, the head of our state and the Israeli prime minister noted that an important step in intensifying bilateral ties had been made. Nursultan Nazarbayev also announced that it was decided to set up a joint economic commission and that its main task would be to promote the implementation of the agreements that have been reached.

The same day the president of our republic met representatives of Israel's business circles. The heads of major enterprises and associations and entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan, who arrived in this country together with

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Nursultan Nazarbayev to establish contacts with their colleagues, attended the meeting. Kazakhstan's leader spoke about the reforms being carried out in our republic and about its huge economic potential. The young sovereign state's aspiration to develop mutually beneficial relations with various countries, including Israel, he stressed, is supported by the stable social and political situation in the country.

Having finished the official part of his visit, the Kazakh leader accompanied by his wife made for the residence of Israeli President 'Ezer Weizman, where the seeing-off ceremony took place.

Afterwards, at the invitation of Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine, chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, and chairman of Palestine's national government, Nursultan Nazarbayev visited that country. During the talks between them, issues of bilateral relations and topical regional and international problems of mutual interest were discussed. As a result of the talks, an intergovernment agreement on economic cooperation and cooperation in the fields industry and culture was signed. The president of Kazakhstan invited Yasir 'Arafat to pay an official visit to our republic. Its terms are to be determined through diplomatic channels.

Speaking to journalists, Nursultan Nazarbayev noted that his first visit to the city of Gaza is taking place on the eve of important events in the life of the Palestinian people as the country's national administration takes over government of a number of territories. He highly appreciated the pragmatism and wisdom of Palestinian and Israeli leaders who found an optimal way out of this conflict which goes back many years.

Late in the evening on 28 December Nursultan Nazarbayev and officials accompanying him left for home. On the way to Almaty, the president made a stopover in Aktyubinsk.

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Armenia

President Gives Address at Pannational Congress

NC2812212595 Yerevan Radio Yerevan International Service in Armenian 2030 GMT 26 Dec 95

[First of three installments of speech by President Levon Ter-Petrosian at the 7th congress of the Armenian Pannational Movement in Yerevan on 22 December; recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] Esteemed chairman and deputies. I address the Armenian Pannational Movement's [APM] congresses with special pleasure. I have not missed addressing any congress, which I consider a natural venue for sincere confession arising from responsibility before friends and cothinkers. Responsibility aside, my address today is neither a report of account nor a program of action. I simply want to briefly touch upon a number of issues which concern the vital interests of the nation and state, and which therefore constantly trouble our public conscience.

They are: First, the evaluation of Armenia's socioeconomic situation. Second, the present state of affairs as regards the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem. Third, the characteristics of Armenian-diaspora relations. And fourth, the prospects of shaping political institutions in Armenia — particularly that of consolidating the structures of the APM and the Republic bloc.

Though the issues at hand may appear to be few, I am going to broach them comprehensively, therefore, despite being tired, I request you be patient.

In terms of the evaluation of Armenia's economic situation, three clearly defined phases should be noted in the period from 1990 — when we came to power — to 1995. The first is the phase of economic slump. It covers the period from January 1990 — it had started even earlier — to November 1993. That is, until the dissolution of the Soviet Union as an economic system. This period is marked by the collapse of the unified ruble zone and with the introduction of the national currencies. I want to clarify the following: As a political system and structure, the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991; as an economic structure and a unified economic zone, in November 1993 when the ruble zone was discarded.

The second one is the economic stabilization phase which covered the period between November 1993 and December 1994, when thanks to the republic's domestic resources and humanitarian assistance it became possible to halt the further slump in the economy, mitigate inflation, and stabilize the national currency. This took one year.

And third, the phase of economic recovery, which started as of 1 December 1994 on the basis of the joint program worked out by the republic's government and the IMF for the restoration of the macroeconomic balances and for the creation of the preconditions for economic development.

In fact, this division into phases is fully born not only by the analytical data, but also the numerical indicators of the Armenian economy.

I have no intention of burdening you with macroeconomic or statistical evidence that may be understandable to the experts but are no different from Chinese hieroglyphic for ordinary persons.

There are, however, a number of simple indicators intelligible for all which could provide a full picture of the real state of affairs. Let us confine ourselves to a few of them:

The Armenian republic's overall budget revenue for 1993 was — and I want to express it in terms of dollars — $44 million. In 1994, it was $94 million. And in 1995, it reached $216 million. That is, the budget revenue has increased 4.9-fold in three years.

The budget's revenues from taxation: This actually reflects the internal potential of the republic's economy. The revenue from taxation: It constituted a total of $23 million in 1993, and $66 and $134 million for 1994 and 1995 respectively. This is a 5.9-fold increase in three years. These are bare facts that needing no interpretation.

The average monthly nominal wage: It was $7.5 in 1993, but fell by $6 in 1994 — mostly for salaries paid out of the budget — and was $15.6 in 1995.

Inflation: It was 3,727 percent in December 1993 compared to December of the previous year; that is a 37-fold increase. It was 18-fold in 1994, and a mere 0.26-fold in 1995.

The consumer prices for the same years increased 110-fold in 1993, 19-fold in 1994, and 1.2-fold in 1995.

Dram's value compared to dollar: It fell 22-fold between November 1993 and May 1994. It fluctuated around 350 dram for the rest of 1994. And, throughout 1995 it stayed virtually unchanged at around 405-406 dram.

A final striking figure: More benzine was imported to Armenia in 1995 than during the whole three previous years. Contrary to malicious predictions, the flow of benzine has been continuing at the same level even after the imposition of the excise tax. It is around 1,000 tons per day.

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In noting all these, I have no intention of enlivening the picture and drawing arrogant conclusions. Rather, I think that the mentioned facts give neither a ground for regarding the achievements as unimportant nor causing excessive euphoria. They merely attest to a slow process of economic stability and steady positive trends in the improvement of the socio-economic situation in the republic, which I am sure we will maintain in the coming years with the aim of consistently realizing the election campaign of the Republic bloc.

Alongside the positive, I also consider it my duty to note openly all those basic shortcomings and mistakes which Armenia's present authorities have allowed in recent years. Naturally, in each concrete case it is possible to find logical explanations and justifications for shortcomings and mistakes. However, I will refrain from such an approach and will confine myself to four facts:

I consider the first serious mistake, which had extremely grave consequences, to be our procrastination in 1993 as regards the introduction of the national currency. It is true that procrastination had a weighty political reason, including not putting Armenia in danger of accusation of being the initiator of the disintegration of the ruble zone. We had no right to be the first to break away from Russia. It was Russia which forced us to face the fact. But, in any case and in retrospect, I think that we had to act more boldly. In which case, even if we could not have avoided the uncontrolable devaluation in the autumn of 1993, we would have at least substantially minimized it.

The second mistake in my opinion was the slowing down, or to put it more harshly, the halting of the privatization process in 1993 and 1994. Here too, if one wishes, one could search and find many explanations. But, I see no justification. In my deep conviction, the slowing down of the privatization process put back the realization of the economic reforms in Armenia by a year at the least.

I cannot but also mention serious shortcomings in the methodology of evaluation of the objects slated for privatization and in the implementation of the privatization program. These are causing unnecessary suspicion and gossip among the public.

The third serious shortcoming, mistake if you want, of the authorities was neglect of due fastidiousness as regards the activities of the law enforcement and economic supervisory organs. No one can deny the glaring phenomena of bribery and illegal activities widespread in the taxation department, customs administration, Interior Ministry, prosecutor's office, and in the judicial systems. Certainly, measures have been taken and numerous employees in these organs have been penalized. But the situation is far from being considered comforting.

And finally, I consider the next concrete mistake to be the government's gross miscalculation of revenues in the 1995 budget and the accumulation of nearly $50 million in debt to Turkmenistan for gas imports. This is going to be a heavy burden for us in the next year.

In view of the positive trends in Armenia's economic life and considering the enumerated mistakes and shortcomings, I think that our future urgent problems have become self-evident.

First, our goal is to sharply accelerate, not in word but in deed, and regulate the privatization process. It is true that rumors and gossip are not going to end with this. It will remain a constant subject of political exploitation even if angels descend from the heaven to implement the privatization program. Regardless of everything, however, it is obvious that the following urgent measures have to be implemented in the privatization process:

First, the methodology of evaluating the objects slated for privatization, strict regulation of the privatization of limited stock companies, and the formation by the National Assembly of the permanent mechanisms to supervise the privatization process must be clarified.

Secondly, the struggle against bribery, illegal activities, violation of the citizens' rights in the law enforcement and economic supervisory organs as well as in the ministries and state supervisory boards must be strengthened. Periodic checks on the employees in the taxation department, customs administration, and in the Interior Ministry must take place. Harmonious work should be carried out so that these organs can struggle against manifestations of a black economy and stop obstructing the development of free enterprise by unnecessary and often criminal intervention.

Next, urgent measures must be taken to settle the debt with Turkmenistan arising from gas imports. Discipline in obtaining payments from the communal services and irrigation networks for the power supply must be ensured.

In addition to these concrete measures against certain problems, even more serious strategic problems permanently face the republic. These being the painful problems such as the expansion of the capital investments, the technological revamping of the production sector, encouragement of special investments, and the overcoming of embargoes.

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Border Positions Come Under Rocket Fire

NC2812190995 Yerevan Radio Yerevan International Service in Armenian 1730 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Armenian Defense Ministry reported an incident on Armenia's northeastern border yesterday. The subunits of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces used Zenith rocket launchers to periodically shell the defensive positions of Kolagir in Tavush between 1945-2145. There were no casualties. The Armenian Armed Forces retaliated in kind and forced the enemy to cease firing. No incidents have taken place on the rest of Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

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